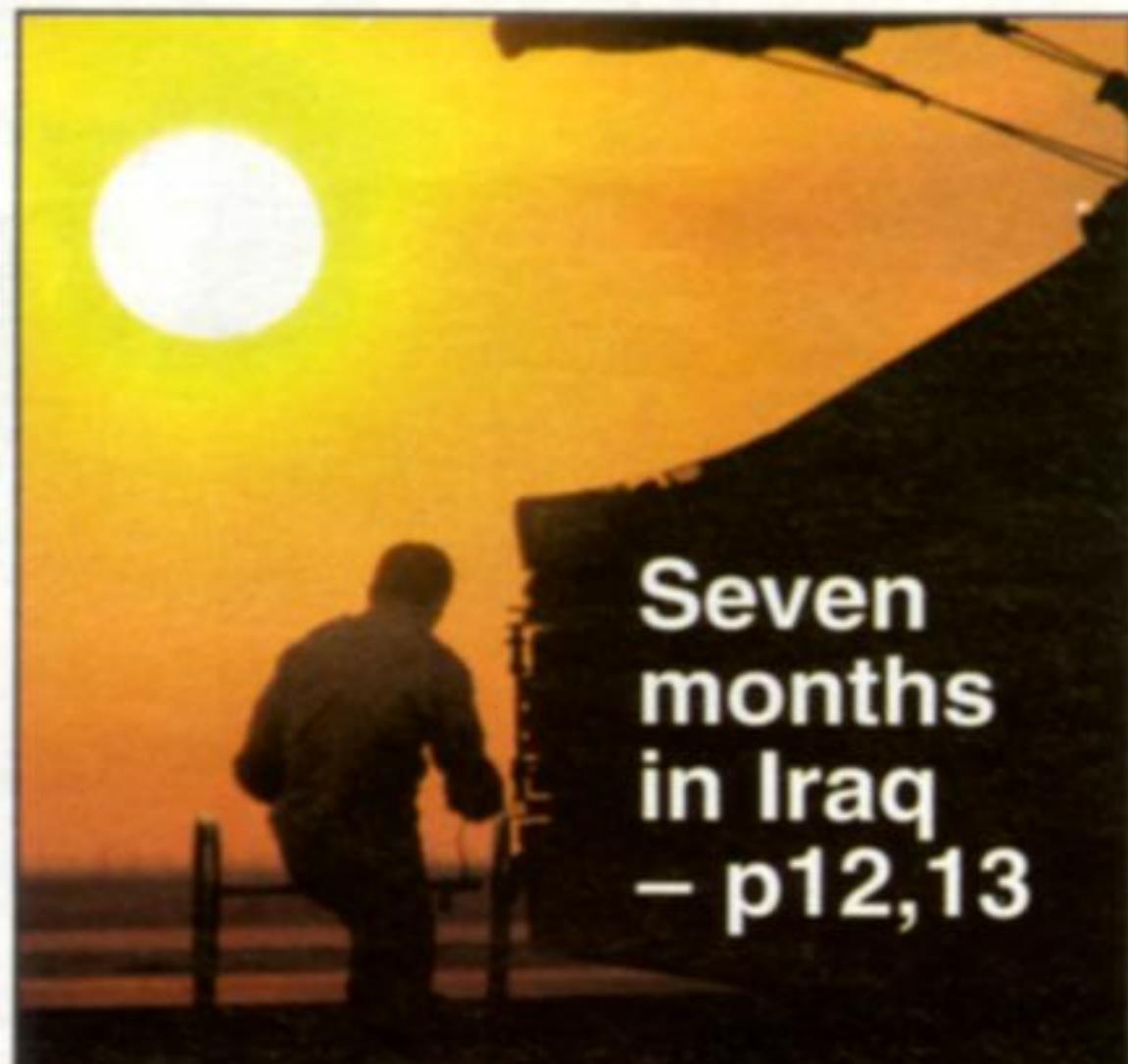




Submariner fourth
time around – p10



Seahorse story
of a bottle of
Scotch – p18



Seven
months
in Iraq
– p12,13

Gulf war
operation
'something
Britain
should be
proud of',
says First
Sea Lord

BRITAIN's first sailor says the nation must better understand the importance of the sea – especially with the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar looming.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West said it was time for the criticism which has been chipping away at the RN to die down – and instead people should recognise that Britain had the second most potent Fleet in the world, surpassed only by the USA.

He also committed the Navy to a fleet gathering in the Solent in the summer of 2005 attended by more nations than at any previous fleet review.

And he said new ships coming into service such as HMS Albion, plus future vessels such as the new carriers, Type 45 destroyers and RFA Bay class would give the Senior Service "a step change in capability".

Speaking at the London Boat Show aboard frigate HMS Northumberland, Admiral West said with 200th anniversary commemorations of Trafalgar imminent, it was time people appreciated the

'NOBODY DOES IT BETTER': 1SL



● Turn to back page

WINNING PICTURES

• Above: ships' company from HMS Ark Royal keep a watchful eye out during Operation Telic – one of this year's entries in the RN Photographic Branch Peregrine Trophy competition. See centre pages.

Picture: LA(PHOT) Sean Clee

Crowe movie 'outstanding'

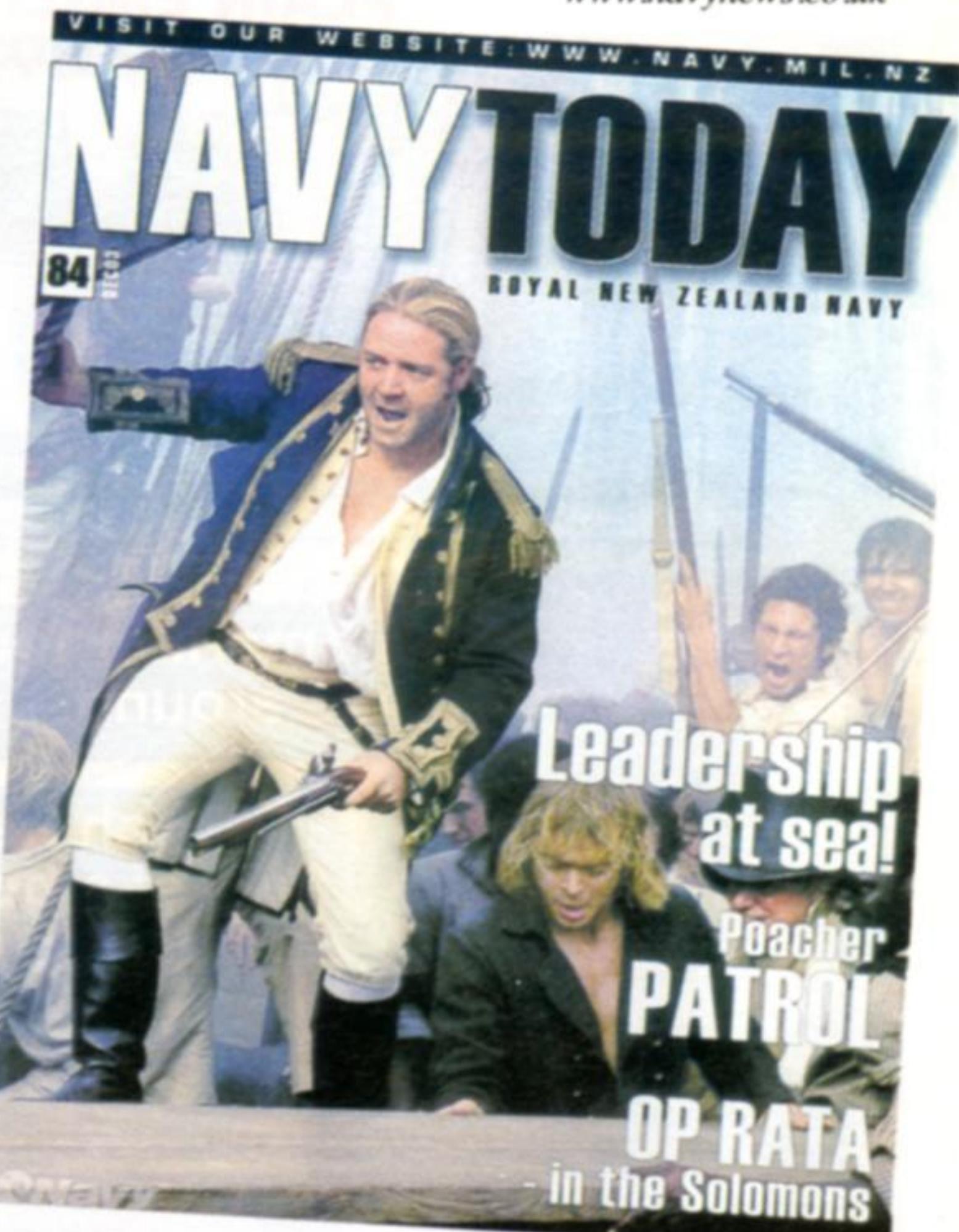


AT THE Edinburgh premiere of *Master and Commander*, the hit film set during the Napoleonic Wars starring Russell Crowe, Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland Rear Admiral Nick Harris met two crew members from the replica ship Captain Cook's Endeavour, used in the making of the movie – Jo Crawley and David Luck.

"I enjoyed the film immensely," said Admiral Harris. "It was outstanding, fantastic – and I am recommending it to all my staff."

Proceeds from the Edinburgh showing went to SSAFA Forces Help.

Kiwi-born Crowe, who plays Capt Jack Aubrey, RN, a character from the novels of Patrick O'Brian, features on the December cover of *Navy News*' Royal New Zealand Navy counterpart, *Navy Today* (right).



Oldest destroyer faces new threat

BRITAIN'S oldest serving destroyer HMS Newcastle joined the war on international terrorism when she sailed to join NATO forces in the Mediterranean.

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Cdr R.A.A. Thomas MBE, CO HMS GRAFTON: "You want me to do that RAS again, because the sun was in the wrong place?!"
Helga Dowie, Line Producer: "How many en-suite cabins do you have onboard available for our use during filming?"

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The 'Geordie Gunboat', now 26 years old, left home in Portsmouth on January 6 for a seven-month tour of duty in the approaches to the Suez Canal.

Allied navies have been conducting Operation Active Endeavour since October 2001 in the aftermath of the terrorist atrocities in the USA.

As a 'choke point', the approaches to the Suez and busy shipping lanes of the eastern Mediterranean are seen as a potential route for revolutionaries to move by sea, especially with ever more landward routes being denied them.

After providing emergency cover during the fire strike in 2002-03, normal RN duties resumed for Newcastle, including taking part in the Fleet gathering for the Queen off Plymouth last summer.

The Type 42 destroyer will work with warships from the USA, Italy, Turkey, Greece and the Netherlands, quizzing suspicious vessels and boarding them if necessary.

"It will be a long – and busy – deployment, but we are all looking forward to it," said Newcastle's Commanding Officer, Cdr Jeremy Blunden.

"It will be interesting working closely with other navies in what is an important international operation."

The RN's contribution to the global war on terrorism is mirrored on the other side of the Suez Canal by sister frigates HMS Norfolk and St Albans working in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf.

FIGUREHEADS



HMS PEARL

THE name Pearl has a long and illustrious history in the Royal Navy – a Pearl fought under Lord Howard of Effingham against the Spanish Armada in 1588.

Today the tenth vessel to be given the name is on display at the Museum of HMAS Cerberus at Westernport, Victoria in Australia.

This Pearl was ordered on March 14, 1825 and launched in Colchester on March 17, 1828 as a 558 ton sloop of the Pearl Class, designed by Mr Sainty.

Armed with 18 32pdr guns and with a complement of 125, she had a relatively uneventful Service career, working mostly on coastal deployment, and was finally paid off in 1850 to be broken up the following year.

The figurehead shows a woman wearing a small tiara and necklace made of pearls, holding in her outstretched left hand a shell filled with pearls.

She is dressed in a red, loose-flowing classical Regency-style gown, modelled on the Roman stola, and has her hair taken up at the back revealing a long and slender neck.

For a small vessel, she has been very well executed.

Originally catalogued in the early 1900s as being part of the collection of Naval Figureheads at Chatham Dockyard, in 1927 she was given on loan, together with the figureheads of HMS Pylades and Encounter, to the old Flinders Naval Depot Museum in Australia.

All three were for a number of years located outside the entrance to HMAS Cerberus, with Pearl given pride of place high on top of the verandah of the administration block, looking out over the parade ground.

OLD DOG LEARNS NEW TRICKS

VETERAN mine countermeasures vessel HMS Hurworth will test the Navy's latest piece of hi-tech wizardry from next month.

The Hunt Class warship is the first of eight MCMVs to be given the latest sonar system, 2193.

The RN is investing £50m in the sonar and a new command system – Nautis 3 – for eight Hunts over the next 12 months to maintain the Senior Service as the world leader in mine warfare.

The new sonar, developed by experts from QinetiQ, the defence research group, is wideband with greater energy to improve range and detection. In layman's terms, 2193 can pick out a bowling ball at 1,000 metres.

Hurworth spent the last six months of 2003 undergoing an extensive overhaul and trials before the new sonar kit was fitted.

That will be put to the test from next month before the remaining seven Hunts used for anti-mine duties – three of the Class serve in Northern Ireland – are upgraded by 2005.

● VETERAN: HMS Hurworth in 1987



£2m windfall for Submarine Museum

LATEST stage in the transformation of the RN Submarine Museum has begun after it was awarded nearly £2m by the National Lottery.



● LOTTERY FUNDING: The new Fieldhouse Building at the RN Submarine Museum will help preserve the midget submarine X24. Shown above in 1955 is HMS Stickleback, first of the new improved descendants of the famous boats that attacked the German battleship Tirpitz in Kaafjord, Norway in 1943.

The futuristic Fieldhouse building will enhance exhibition space at the Gosport memorial to the silent service, which at present has more artefacts than it can show to the public.

The £3.1m exhibition hall – named after the late Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fieldhouse of Gosport who was the most senior submariner in RN history – will house the museum's growing educational collection as well as X-craft HMS X24 which at present is exposed to the elements.

The Heritage Lottery Fund gave the museum £1,949,000; supporters of the Gosport attraction are raising the remaining £1m-plus to complete the project, which should be open to visitors early next year in time for 200th anniversary commemorations of Trafalgar.

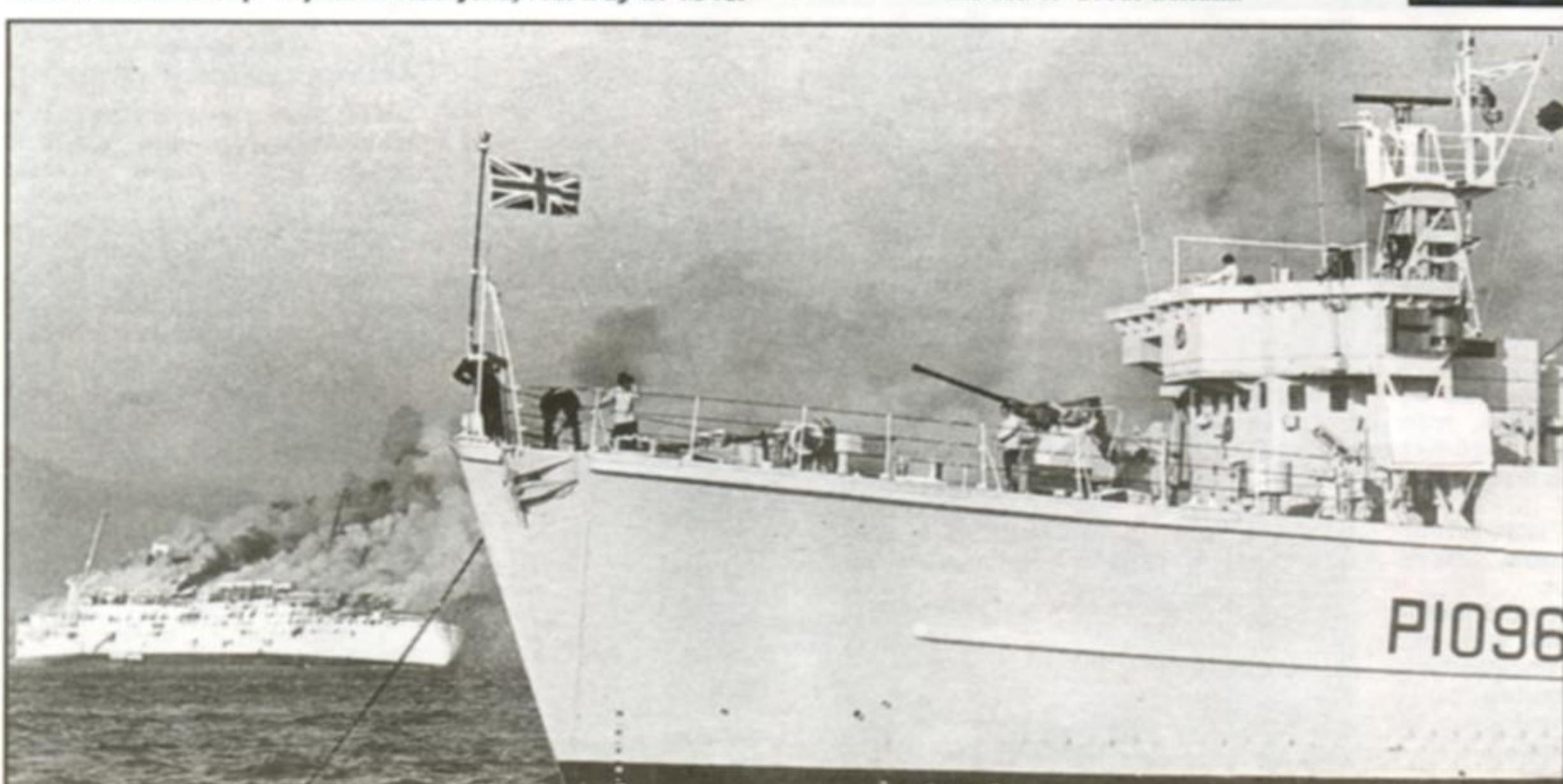
The Fieldhouse building will also house a lecture and corporate entertainment area and a science gallery, plus space for temporary exhibitions.

"The award is marvellous news for our museum," said its Director Cdr Jeff Tall.

The Fieldhouse building will allow us to look after our precious wartime X-craft properly and add an essential educational resource.

"The modern submarine is the most complex machine built by man and we want our visitors of all ages to share the experience and to understand the importance of the sea to Great Britain."

● Does actress Emily Hamilton look a bit apprehensive alongside Alex Farnes (remember him as evil wife beater Trevor in EastEnders?) or what? She shouldn't worry – the pair star in the new RN-based ITV drama series Making Waves, due to hit the small screen later this year (see opposite) – and this time Alex is definitely on the side of the angels.



Flashback – campus Queen's dramatic end

MAIDEN voyage of the Queen Mary 2 last month prompted interest in ships' names (see Letters, p7) and comparisons with earlier great liners in the national press.

The sad end of the first Queen Elizabeth at Hong Kong in was witnessed by the Sixth Mine Countermeasures 'Dragon' Squadron and this picture, taken by Lt Cdr Mike Bracelin, CO of HMS Beaufort, appeared in *Navy News* February 1972 edition.

Renamed 'Seawise University', the 83,000 ton Cunarder was within five days of sea trials following a £2m refit when plans to turn her into a floating campus came to a sudden end.

A workforce of more than 1,200 had been toiling to convert her to her new role since her arrival in the Crown Colony in July

1971, but within hours she was reduced to a burnt-out shell.

In the foreground is HMS Yarnton, among several ships and helicopters sent to the rescue – but so fierce was the blaze that she was forced to stand off and watch the end of a grand old lady of the seas.

□ Among those on board the Queen Mary 2 when she sailed on January 12 was Director Trafalgar 200 and Deputy Director of the Royal Naval Museum Colin White. He was invited by Cunard to give a series of lectures on board – *Celebrating Britain and the Sea*.

No change to the Red Ensign

A PROPOSAL to 'deface' the Red Ensign has been defeated in the European Parliament.

And fears that the same proposal may have affected the White Ensign were groundless, according to a Ministry of Defence spokesman.

A proposal was put forward in a transport committee meeting that "ships registered in a Member State shall display the emblem of the European Union, i.e. a circle of 12 gold stars on a square blue background, in the corner of their flags."

Such a change is described as 'defacing' a flag – a technical term which does not carry any implication of vandalism or despoilment.

The move sparked a debate in the British maritime community at the end of last year – and there were some who feared that the White Ensign may also fall in the same category.

But last month a vote in the European Parliament went against the proposal.

MEP Jacqueline Foster, the Conservative Transport Spokesman in the European Parliament, said: "There was no justification for the compulsory display of the European Union symbol on the Red Ensign – it would not have enhanced security or ease of identification."

"Hundreds of years of maritime tradition were under threat, and I am delighted that Britain's merchant fleet can continue to proudly fly the historic Red Ensign."

The MOD spokesman said: "There are no plans for the White Ensign to be defaced by the European Union flag."

"The White Ensign remains the maritime flag of commissioned warships and ship's boats of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines and the Royal Naval Reserve."

"Even when a Royal Navy vessel operates as part of a NATO task group it continues to fly the White Ensign."

"The only body authorised to fly a defaced White Ensign is the Royal Yacht Squadron – an exclusive privilege since 1842."

Concert date

THE BAND of the Royal Marines are to stage a Spring Concert at St Mary's Church in Portsmouth on Thursday March 18 at 7.30pm. Doors open at 6.45pm.

Tickets are £6, or £5 for concessions and £3 for children.

Details from the Concert Secretary RMSM, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH, tel (023) 9272 6182.

Another concert will be held at the church on Thursday April 1.

Lynx pilot rewarded with citation

LYNX pilot Alex Johnson has been rewarded for his skill and professionalism during a challenging time over Sierra Leone.

The 815 NAS aviator was serving with frigate HMS Iron Duke on patrol in the Caribbean 12 months ago when the ship was ordered to steam back across the Atlantic to Africa's west coast.

Operation Keeling was instigated to show the UK's commitment to the troubled African nation at a time when it appeared unrest was about to flare up again.

In February and March last year, Lt Johnson's Lynx was the sole British military aircraft in theatre.

He carried out 60 hours of incident-free sorties over the country and waters offshore – flying which earned him a citation from Lt Gen Sir John Reith.

Iron Duke's Lynx was also sent up on a three-hour search and rescue mission which turned out to be a false alarm, and he flew into a previously unvisited and badly-lit landing site to help fly someone

back to the UK for compassionate reasons.

Lt Johnson's citation reads: "Responding with enthusiasm to each task, regardless of how demanding it was, Alex displayed the attitude and capability that sets apart military aviation."

The 29-year-old officer, however, says the citation is as much for Iron Duke's flight team and crew who ensured every mission ran smoothly as it is for himself.

Stranded fishermen rescued by Norfolk

ELEVEN Iraqi fishermen who had been adrift for five days when their dhow broke down in the Northern Gulf are safe, thanks the Type 23 frigate HMS Norfolk.

The Devonport-based warship deployed to the Middle East in October and has recently resumed patrol duties in Iraqi coastal waters as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, following a Christmas break in Dubai.

The crippled dhow, drifting far from land, was first spotted by an Allied surveillance aircraft, and HMS Norfolk altered course to investigate.

Night had fallen by the time the frigate reached the dhow, and the

ship's boarding party was greeted by a very relieved crew of fishermen.

The fishing vessel Al Asraa, based in Basra, had sailed eleven days earlier, but her engine had suddenly failed.

The boat drifted for five days, and the crew had run out of food two days before the British warship's intervention, so the Iraqis were delighted when they were provided with food and water.

They were even more pleased when two of Norfolk's mechanics managed to restart the dhow's engine.

POMEMs Des O'Connor and Dobbo Dobson went over to the dhow and managed to turn the engine using batteries brought



● The stricken dhow Al Asraa pictured from an Allied surveillance aircraft over the Northern Gulf

across from the frigate.

An overall check resulted in a few adjustments, and the engine was running smoothly again, providing power and light for the relieved crew.

The Iraqis demonstrated their gratitude by presenting the sailors and Royal Marines of the boarding party with fish they had caught.

The Commanding Officer of HMS Norfolk, Cdr Tony Radakin, said: "We were glad to be of assistance to the Al Asraa."

"It is good to be helping the people of Iraq, whether they are fishermen stricken at sea or as a result of our more usual business of protecting Iraqi oil terminals and preventing oil smuggling from Iraq."

Norfolk spent a brief Christmas break in Dubai, where the celebrations included a carol concert in the hangar and the ship's own version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*.

Christmas dinner was served by the officers, as is traditional, and the various messes and departments on board managed to dine ashore in local restaurants and make use of the sports and pool facilities at the 'Aviation Club' before the ship resumed her programme of patrols and visits.

The break was welcomed by the ship's company – in the run-up to Christmas, apart from the usual patrols, the frigate had taken part in joint Exercise Neon Falcon with the Bahrainian and US Navies.

This involved a hectic period of firing the gun, conducting approaches to tankers in preparation for replenishments at sea (RASes), air defence serials and other tests of seamanship.

Other vessels involved included the American Ticonderoga-class cruiser USS Philippine Sea and the Bahrainian Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate Sabha.



● POMEMs Des O'Connor and Dobbo Dobson of Type 23 frigate HMS Norfolk get to work on the failed engine of the stricken fishing vessel Al Asraa in the Northern Gulf, watched by anxious members of the Basra-based vessel's crew

Gloucester goes Gallic

A ROYAL Navy destroyer has sailed on a deployment which will see her join a French task group and visit the Middle East and India.

HMS Gloucester, which recently emerged from a £24 million refit, left Portsmouth for Barcelona as *Navy News* went to press.

After a visit to the Spanish port she will call in at Toulon to integrate into the French task group, headed by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier FS Charles de Gaulle.

At the end of a two-week work-up the group will sail east for the Suez Canal and the Indian Ocean.

The deployment is scheduled to last for just under

five months, and will include exercises with the French, Indian, Omani and other navies.

Gloucester will visit ports in India and the Red Sea area before returning to the Mediterranean.

On her way home she will visit Portsmouth's twin city of Caen in Northern France before taking part in the commemorations for the 60th anniversary of D-Day off the beaches of Normandy.

The Commanding Officer of the destroyer, Cdr Malcolm Cree, said: "We are well prepared for this deployment and looking forward to working with our friends and colleagues in the French Navy during this 100th anniversary year of the Entente Cordiale."

Dolphin kneeler surfaces

A CHURCH kneeler decorated with submarine dolphins, dreamt up at Westminster Abbey during the Submarine Centennial celebrations in 2001, has been presented to St Mary's Church at Ashill in Somerset under the watchful eye of John Simpson.

John, an ex-submariner who served in HMS Excalibur and HMS Orpheus, is now Vice Deacon at Bristol Cathedral.

The kneeler was created by Lady Armstrong (centre), wife of the former Cabinet Secretary at the time of the Falklands War.

Also on hand was Rear Admiral Submarines, Rear Admiral Niall Kilgour.

The occasion was celebrated in traditional style, with the new dolphins 'christened' accordingly, and penitent submariners are now welcome to make use of the kneeler.



Tyne helps search for fishermen

PATROL ship HMS Tyne has been involved in the search for fishermen from a French trawler off the coast of Cornwall.

The River-class ship acted as on-scene co-ordinator in a search 15 miles south of the Lizard peninsula for survivors of a fishing vessel which capsized and sank in gale force winds and mountainous seas.

The search and rescue (SAR) operation was co-ordinated by Falmouth Coastguard, and included Royal Navy SAR aircraft from 771 Naval Air Squadron, based at RN air station Culdrose near Helston, an RAF rescue helicopter, two lifeboats, a Coastguard emergency towing vessel as well as other Naval and merchant ships.

Tyne was on Fishery Protection Patrol in Falmouth Bay when she was tasked by the Coastguard.

Speaking during the operation, her Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Brian Taylor, said: "I have organised all the merchant vessels to start patrolling a search area given to us by Falmouth Coastguard.

"We are very carefully looking for debris or any evidence of anybody in the water.

"The conditions we are working in are considerably difficult, with a wind of 45 knots from the west, a sea state of about 5 to 6 and visibility of about one mile.

"HMS Tyne has all available personnel on the upper deck, keeping a sharp eye out."

Two bodies were spotted and recovered from the water by a Royal Navy Sea King, from Culdrose just after Tyne arrived on the scene, but the remaining three crew members of the Guinevere-registered trawler were still missing as *Navy News* went to press.

The search was called off as darkness fell and conditions worsened, but Navy helicopters which exercise in the area maintained a watch for further bodies or debris from the boat.

By that stage HMS Tyne had resumed her fishery patrol duties, and called in at Plymouth for a weekend visit.

Scott's new kit proves its worth

NEW surveying kit fitted to HMS Scott is proving its worth on a marathon deployment.

The ocean survey ship sailed in November for trials before heading to the Mediterranean to begin work in earnest.

In one month alone, her new CARIS surveying computer software collected 6,500 miles of data by the time she reached Crete.

Since then, Scott, which rotates crew regularly to keep up a high operational tempo, has sailed through the Suez Canal into the Middle East.

Survey work has continued in the Indian Ocean and off Oman, and in late spring she will head back out into the Atlantic for more surveys, making her first visit to Cape Town in the process.

Busy times for the 'Crazy A'

VETERAN mine warfare ship HMS Atherstone has put into Faslane briefly for an overhaul after a hectic six months hunting mines and shady fishermen.

The 'Crazy A' has managed to squeeze in fishery patrols in a half-year which saw her put through sea training, appear at a fish festival and clock up 4,000 miles at sea.

During her busiest spell monitoring and protecting fishing stocks, 40 trawlers were boarded, leading to five prosecutions in the courts for flouting regulations.

The Hunt-class ship was a highlight of the Brixham Fish Festival in Devon, when more than 5,000 people paid a visit.

Fishery patrols resume shortly, followed by a spell running out of Portsmouth for weapons training and instruction for junior officers in foreign navies.

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From illegitimate to illustrious

FOR a vessel whose name has dubious beginnings, HMS St Albans has become a warship which has distinguished herself through the centuries.

Today St Albans is part way through her first deployment, putting the check on smugglers and terrorists in the Middle East and Indian Ocean.

But few of her 180 crew probably know the less than auspicious surroundings which gave her predecessor her title more than three centuries ago.

The ship takes her name from the bastard son of Charles II and Nell Gwyn, Charles Beauclerk, the first Duke of St Albans, who was born barely two decades before the first of six HMS St Albans served the crown.

That first in line was a fourth rate built in 1687, served William of Orange the following year and fought in the victory off Barfleur in 1692. She was wrecked 12 months later in a storm as she hurried for shelter in Kinsale harbour.

The same fate befell her successor, another 50-gun fourth rate, in Jamaica in 1744, when a hurricane smashed through the Caribbean. In her five-year career, the vessel had completed blockade duties in the war with Spain and successfully

ferried soldiers to the Indies.

Gales seemed to have dogged the name St Albans. Even the present bearer of the name hasn't escaped the curse.

In October 2002, a ferry crashed the frigate while she was berthed in Portsmouth Naval Base, interrupting her training programme.

But that is in the past. A rejuvenated St Albans came out of repairs, sailed through operational training and off to the Middle East in November last year.

The demands of the global war on terror meant that she was one of the few RN vessels actually at sea on December 25.

Not that that stopped crew enjoying themselves (or munching...).

In fine RN tradition, youngest crewman OM James Edwards, just 17, swapped places with Commanding Officer Cdr Mark Knibbs for the day; the flight deck became home to a carol service; a Naval chaplain conducted Midnight Mass; and officers served the ranks their Christmas dinner before tucking into their own meals.

And what a dinner: eight turkeys, 25kg gammon, 25kg beef, 30kg bacon, 6kg stuffing, 400 chipolatas, 50kg spuds, 15kg sprouts, 15kg carrots, 20 large Christmas puddings, two



• Belying her beginnings in the 17th century, today's Type 23 frigate HMS St Albans – the most advanced frigate in the Royal Navy's arsenal

Christmas cakes, 300 mince pies, 14 tubs of Quality Street, 12 boxes of chocolate puddings, 12 boxes of mints, six gallons of brandy sauce, 10 gallons of gravy and 180 bloated sailors.

Crew were allowed to let their hair down at New Year, when the ship put into the Seychelles.

The frivolity was a brief let-up in the ceaseless war on terror.

St Albans arrived in the Middle East in late November and found her patrol patch stretched from the Gulf to the Horn of Africa.

A team of Royal Marines provides the punch against terrorists and smugglers moving by sea, leading the boarding party which inspects suspicious vessels.

There's also assistance to other seafarers in the region to offer. St

Albans recently came across 34 people – women and children among them – crammed aboard a barely seaworthy vessel. The RN team checked over the boat and gave the refugees supplies to continue their voyage.

It has taken more than three long years to get to this stage.

St Albans hurried down the slipway at BAE Systems' yard in Scotstoun in May 2000.

Her launch brought the curtain down on a decade of building Type 23, or Duke class, frigates for today's RN.

The Dukes were originally conceived as Atlantic anti-submarine hunters for the Cold War which ended as the first two of the class, HMS Norfolk and Argyll, were entering service.

Instead, the frigates have become the workhorses of the fleet around the globe, called on to perform defence diplomacy, gunfire support, anti-smuggling operations as well as their intended role.

This workhorse role is one the previous St Albans, number five, would recognise all too well.

Built as the USS Thomas in 1918, the RN acquired her in September 1940 under a deal with the United States, for convoy and anti-mine duties.

She was then briefly loaned to the Norwegian Navy before rejoining the RN for duties in the Atlantic and Arctic. Finally, she was given to the Russians who fittingly renamed her Dostoinyi – Worthy, a title perhaps due all six St Albans.

Facts and figures

Class: Type 23 Duke Class frigate

Pennant number: F83

Builder: BAE Systems, Scotstoun

Launched: May 6, 2000

Commissioned: June 6, 2002

Displacement: 4,000 tonnes

Length: 133m

Beam: 16m

Speed: 28kts

Range: 7,800 miles at 15kts

Complement: c.180 (17-22 officers, 57 senior rates, 111 junior ranks)

Machinery: 2x Rolls Royce SM1C gas turbines; 4x Paxman diesel generators driving two GEC electric motors

Weapons: Vertical launch Sea Wolf anti-missile missile system; Harpoon anti-ship missile, 4.5in Mk 8 main gun, 30mm cannons and 7.62mm machine guns; Stingray torpedo

Aircraft: 1x Lynx Mk 8 or Merlin

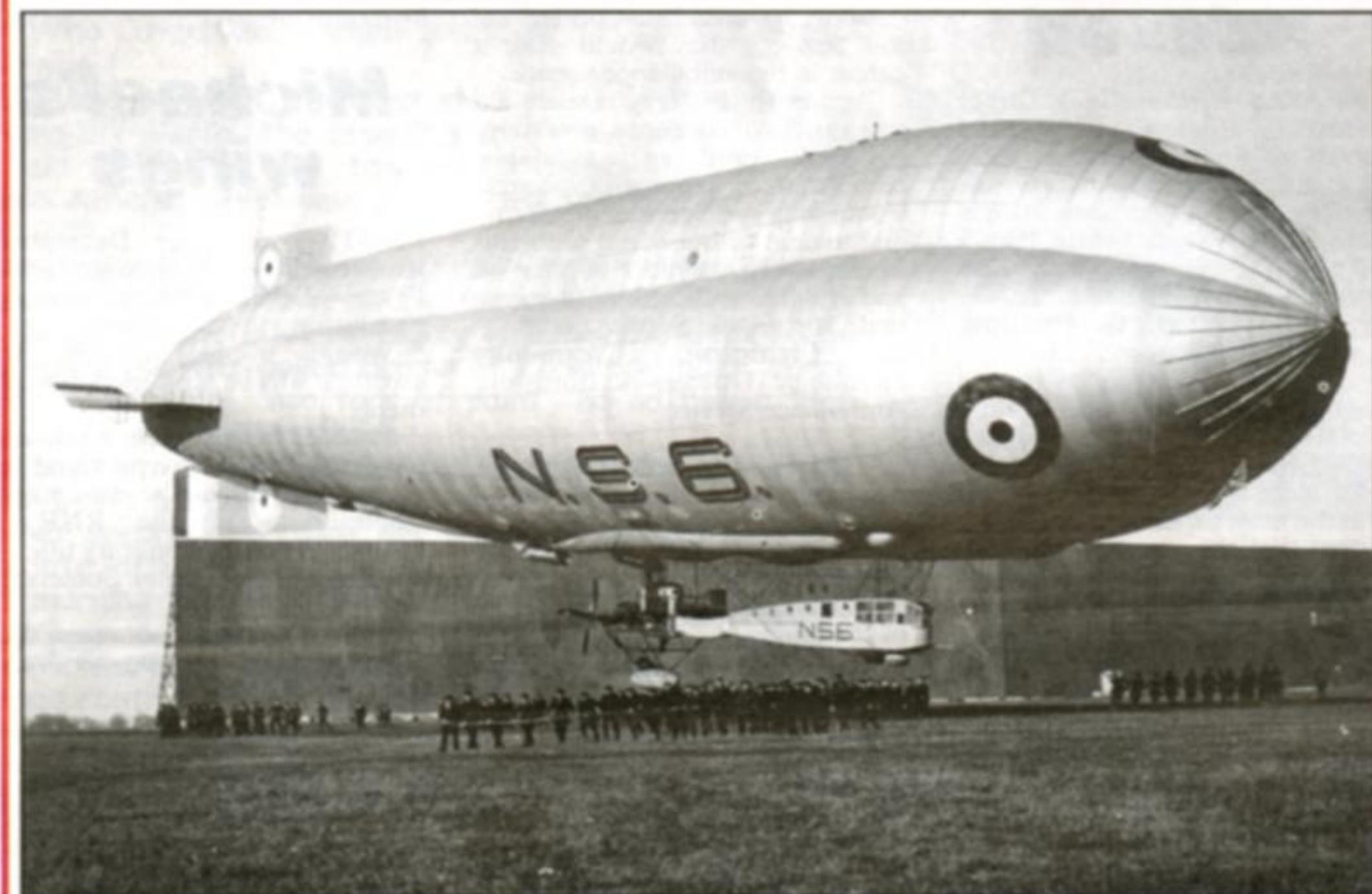
Additional equipment: Ferranti/Thomson Type 2050 sonar

Role: Anti-submarine frigate and general purpose warship useful in the Gulf, Atlantic and Mediterranean

BATTLE HONOURS

Barfleur.....	1692
Lagos.....	1759
St Lucia.....	1778
St Kitts.....	1782
The Saints.....	1782
Atlantic.....	1941-43
English Channel.....	1942
Arctic.....	1942
North Sea.....	1943

AIRCRAFT OF THE ROYAL NAVY No 88



• Non-rigid airship NS6, which served from May 1918 to February 1919 Picture: Fleet Air Arm Museum

North Sea Class Airships

IN THE final two years of the Great War, the Royal Navy led the world in non-rigid airships, a lead due largely to the North Sea class.

Introduced as a stop-gap before rigid airships were ready for service, the North Sea, or NS class, proved highly capable machines in their own right.

At first the craft were plagued by problems, notably with their transmission gear.

But once the trouble was sorted, the NSs began to set endurance records – even though it was only designed for 24-hour sorties.

Powered by two Rolls Royce Eagle and later two Fiat engines, at full throttle, the airship could manage 58mph, carrying up to six 230lb bombs.

Its crew of 10 lived in relative comfort by the standards of the day, enjoying sleeping quarters in the North Sea's gondola. A hot plate was also provided for meals, adapted on one of the engine's exhausts.

The first of the class was delivered to RNAS

Kingsnorth in February 1917. NS-1 went on to fly 1,500 miles in just under 50 hours.

Seventeen of the class were built, NS-1 through to NS-18 (number 13 was renumbered 14 and sold to the Americans), but 15, 17 and 18 never entered service as the war ended.

NS-3 was lost in a storm in June 1918, taking five crew down with her. NS-8 escorted the German High Seas Fleet when it surrendered in November that year.

The non-rigids continued service post-war, but only briefly.

NS-11 proved the most successful, setting an endurance record on minehunting patrol when she remained airborne for more than 100 hours, covering 4,000 miles in the process. Her luck ran out off the East Anglian coast in July 1919 when she crashed, probably after being struck by a bolt of lightning.

The last of the class, NS-7, was paid off – or 'deflated' in 1920 after training American airship crew.

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Letters

JACK

HEY! OPP!!
'OW MANY VALENTINE
CARDS DIDJA
GET?



BY TUBB

Canadian casualties

MY EYE caught the picture of HMCS Haida (November issue) and once I read the caption I had to write and correct it.

First of all, Haida assisted in the destruction of enemy ships and did not sink them all on her own. Her fellow Tribal, HMCS Iroquois actually assisted in sinking more enemy shipping than did Haida.

Iroquois also served in the Korean War, did two tours of duty and was the only Canadian ship to suffer casualties at the hands of the enemy in that conflict.

Also the caption inferred that Canada has preserved two Tribals and mentions HMCS Sackville as one of them. HMCS Sackville is a corvette and the last remaining one. It is a floating museum and can be visited in the summer months in the harbour at Halifax, Nova Scotia. — P. Fane, vice president (West) Canadian Tribal Destroyer Assoc., Saanichton, British Columbia

Rum issue welcomed

IN November issue was a large advert for the large decanter of Pusser's Rum. Unfortunately when my wife ordered one from Nauticalia they were out of stock — would you believe they were somewhere in mid ocean en route for the UK so they could not supply in time for Christmas.

To make amends they sent a miniature worth £10 gratis in the hope of minimising my disappointment — mine to keep whether or not I still wanted the full size decanter. You don't get that kind of service very often these days, do you? — M. Withington, Isle of Sheppey

Letters to the Editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication. Email correspondents are also requested to provide this information.



No. 595 50th year

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Consort played the game

FOLLOWING the recent interest concerning the playing of Uckers in the Royal Navy, I thought your readers might like to see this photograph of a game in progress in HMS Consort in 1951. — Rev Derek Polgreen, St Austell, Cornwall

Two years earlier HMS Consort was involved in the famous Yangtze Incident. She came under fire from Communist shore batteries while attempting to rescue HMS Amethyst and lost eight dead and more than 30 wounded. — Ed



Modern RN medics no longer mere 'assistants'

AS A IHCD Paramedic Officer and former submariner, albeit a fore ends cross trained OEM/UW3, I can understand the frustration the former MA is experiencing (December issue).

RNMS and a CPOMA of 32 years I constantly 'campaigned' for better training and qualifications for the MA and on leaving the RN in 2000 I wrote to the training Commodore on behalf of the MA.

In a personal reply he stated that his father, an ex-FCPOMA, had the same problems 30 years ago!

I am aware of the current efforts of the RNMS and the differences with our civilian counterparts, but also aware of numerous initiatives by the civilian ambulance services which now allow paramedics to be trained, with subsequent qualifications, in injury assessment, diagnostic skills and wound care.

One way around the current problem would be for the Royal Navy or other Services to put their medics through the technicians' course as a matter of standard training.

This could be done as soon as they join the Services or shortly before they leave, therefore allowing the opportunity of better civilian employment when their time is done.

One former RAMC Warrant Officer paid for his own tech course before leaving the Service.

I have had many special forces personnel out with me observing, having done some training in hospital to prepare them for roles abroad where skills not usually seen there may be of use.

Many have said that on leaving the Services they would seek a career in the ambulance service.

As the Royal Navy renders aid to a variety of countries, now more so than ever an ambulance technician or paramedics course would help the Services medics no end to deal with medical problems in relation to the older population and children rather than fit young male and female Service people. — K. Errington, Community Paramedic Officer, Staffordshire Ambulance Service.

I AGREE with ex-MA Ayrton's comments concerning the medical qualifications available to members of the RN Medical Service.

I also agree with the comments of the Office of 2SL in that a C&G is only a starting point. However, as a passionate member of the

Michael's wings

I NOTICE in your December issue there was a photograph of Prince Michael of Kent wearing naval wings on his uniform.

Would it be possible to ascertain why he is entitled to wear them?

In order to wear them it is usual to qualify as a Service pilot and go operational. When he was made Commodore of the RNR I assumed it was an honorary title. — 'Icarus', Queen Camel, Somerset

Prince Michael obtained his wings as a pilot during his Army service. — Ed



Guarantee for ships?

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that CPO Penfold appears to be questioning the wisdom of his C-in-C when choosing the names for the ships of her Navy (January issue) his understanding of the situation needs correcting.

The current Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth 2 (QE2) is not named after Her Majesty. She is actually so called to perpetuate the name Queen Elizabeth in the Cunard fleet – that is, she reflects the fact that she is the successor to the previous ship of the name which was named after Queen Elizabeth, the late Queen Mother, who launched her in 1938.

The misunderstanding is a common one and one that I would also be guilty of had I not overheard a conversation many years ago in which a senior officer of QE2 was recalling his correction of someone who had fallen into the same trap.

This should not occur in future if one bears in mind the fact that the new Cunarder is named Queen Mary 2 thus perpetuating the name Queen Mary.

CPO Penfold's other reasons for querying the validity of naming one of the projected aircraft carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth invite further comments.

If the name is left as it stands, the ship will not in fact be named after the current sovereign unless the Roman numeral II is appended.

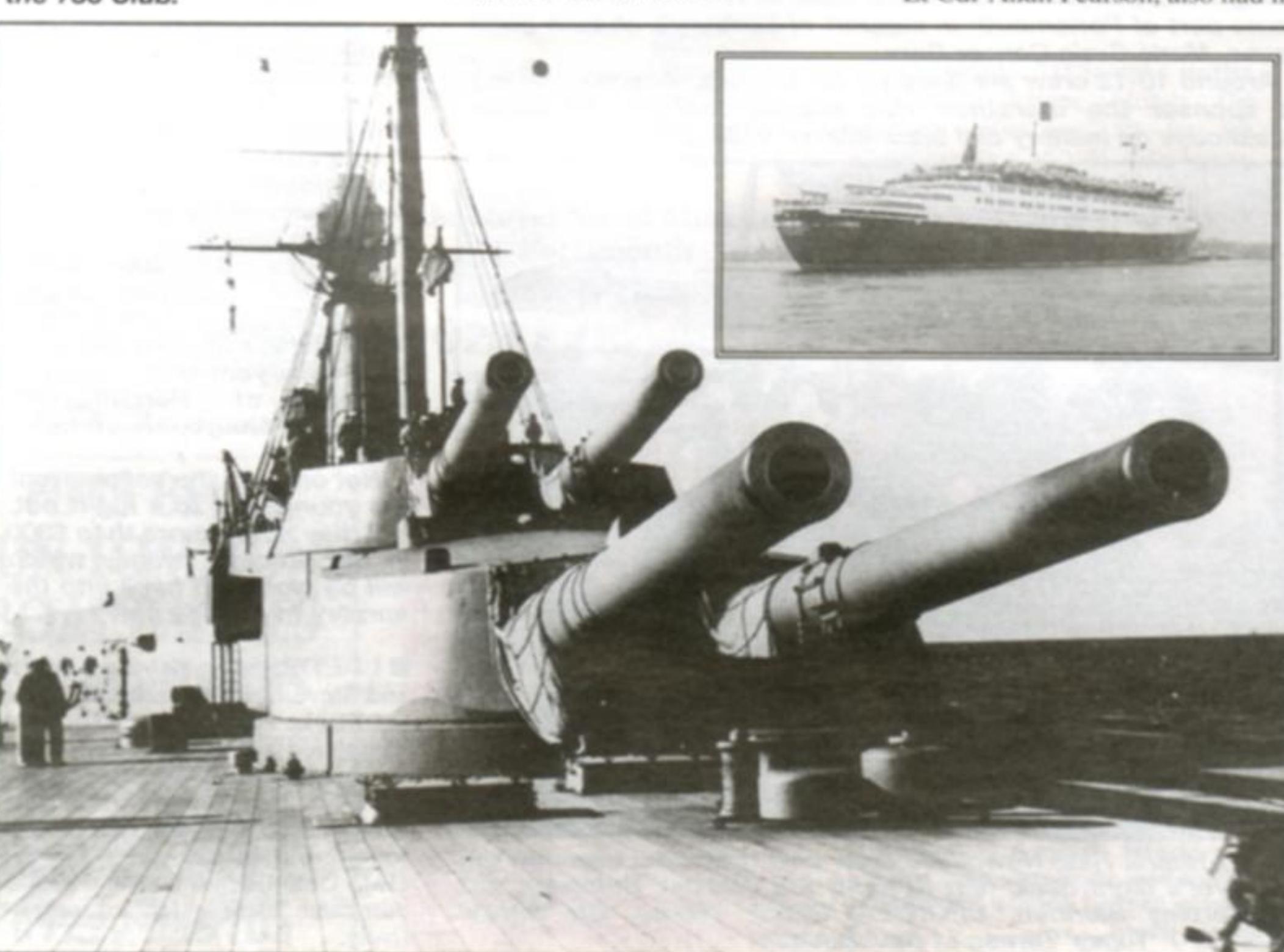
The ship will thus commemorate the first Elizabeth, Elizabeth Tudor, as did her predecessor, a battleship commissioned in 1915.

The naming of such vessels is never undertaken lightly. Forgive my archness, but these names and allocating them now will as good as guarantee that the Royal Navy will get them. No one would dare cancel anything with Her Majesty's name on it. – 'Foul-weather Jacket', Fareham, Hants

Below: The massive after 15in turrets of the battleship HMS Queen Elizabeth, photographed in 1915. Inset: The QE2 leaves the Ocean Terminal at Southampton at the start of her Transatlantic maiden voyage on May 2, 1969.

It was planned that a fly past of 13 Buccaneers of 736 Naval Air Squadron would take place, but bad weather reduced this to five aircraft which made a single run in arrowhead formation in salute to the 'First Lady of the Atlantic'.

The aircraft flew from RN Air Station Lossiemouth led by Lt Cdr D. P. Mears, 736 Sqn CO. The squadron had close ties with the QE2, the number 736 being the yard number of the ship before launch. There was a discotheque on board called the 736 Club.



Disney gives us discounts so why can't Victory?

I ONCE again find myself feeling a second class citizen, having served 20 years in both the RN and RNR.

On a rare visit with my family to Portsmouth, we decided to show our children some of our heritage and visit HMS Victory.

The banner at the ticket office proudly stated discount for Service personnel. I showed my RNR ID and was told that the discount applied only to RN and not RNR and only to me, not my family.

Why are the RNR once again treated so shabbily?

I was very embarrassed in the queue. My husband, as a Mid, was a Victory guide during three months shore time and we now had two disappointed children because we felt so humiliated and disinclined to go round the ship.

It seems my life is worth the same as a regular in battle or when called up, but not ashore.

We were not treated as such at Disneyworld, Florida – their discounts applied to regular and reserve.

It reminds me of the poem on a wall plaque I noticed when in Gibraltar:

God and the sailor all men adore / In times of trouble or times of war / But when the sailor is home and times are righted / God is ignored and the sailor is slighted. – Lt C. A. Kitchen, RNR, HMS Wildfire, Northwood

Barrel for Guard

IT WAS indeed a pleasant surprise to see the photograph of a Royal Guard (December issue). I have the same photograph on the wall in my study because I was a member of that Guard.

The ship I was in, HMS Homeguard, had come in from the North Atlantic with some gash around the screw and we were put into Bidston dry dock to have it removed.

The ship received a signal for all crew apart from one stoker and one seaman to report to the base HMS Irwell.

We were equipped with belt, gaiters, rifle and bayonet and put on the square with a lot of other ships companies and this went on for a week.

At the end of the week we were issued with new collars, new cap tally and told that we were to be a Royal Guard for the King and Queen. The Commander of the base later bought us a barrel of beer. – R. K. Higginbotham, Cheadle, Cheshire.

Bell job too hard

I NOTE from your People in the News page in the January issue that it is claimed that one of HMS Chatham's officers' children was the "first Christening" on board.

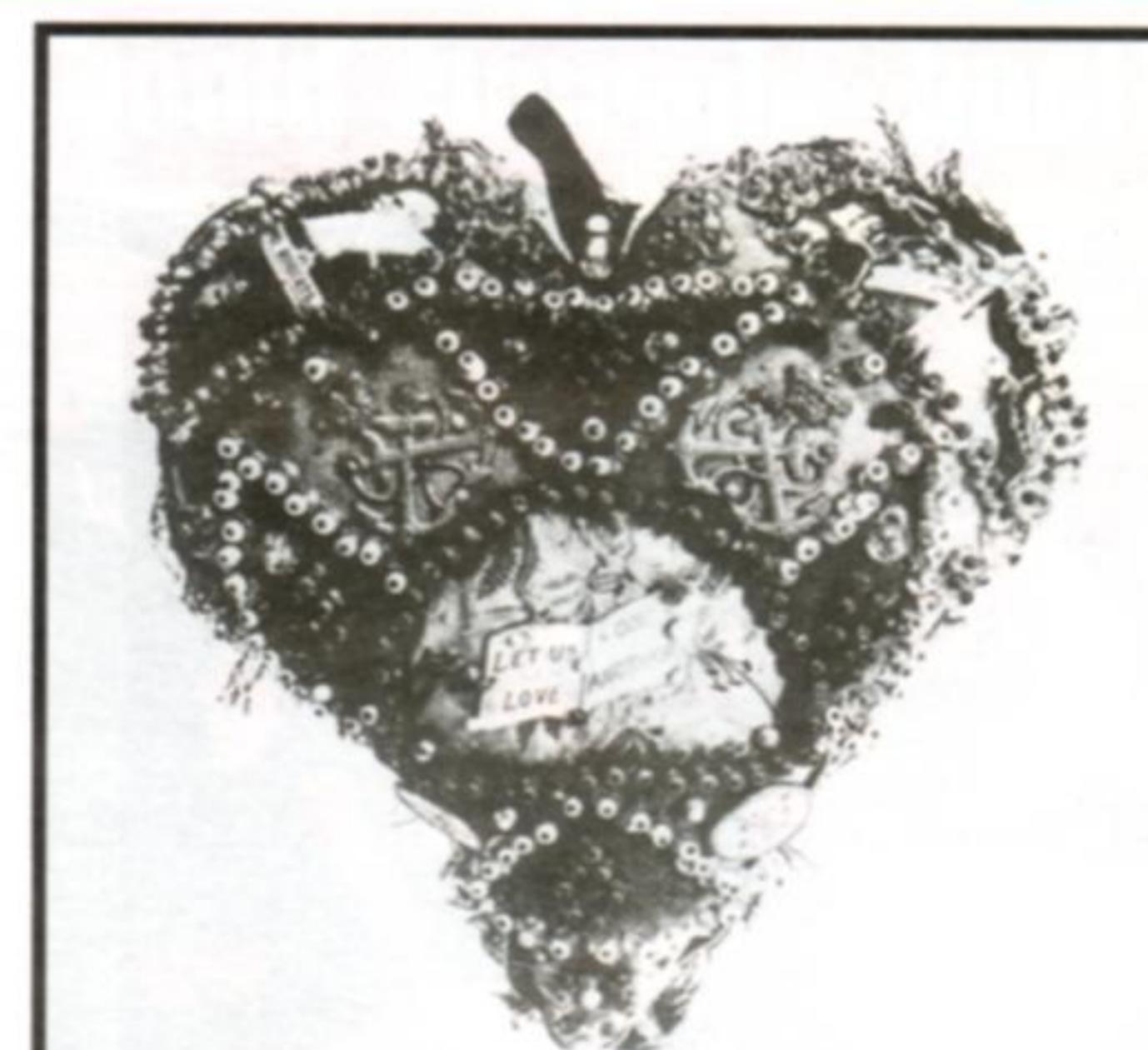
I regret to inform Lt Cdr Nelson that this is not true. Whilst I was First Lieutenant of HMS Chatham from 1994-95 my son, David James Alexander Gibbs, was christened on Saturday, January 14, 1995, on the bridge, by Father Graeme Elmore, then the Padre of HMS Raleigh.

David's was not the only christening that took place whilst we were in that DED and its aftermath, but I do not have details of the others.

I do know that a previous XO, Lt Cdr Allan Pearson, also had his

child christened on board some years before and I am sure that there are many others. The problem occurred when we all tried to get the bell engraved. The then Captain's Secretary wrote to us in 1998 asking for confirmation of details and I, for one, sent a cheque.

We were then told that the bell was made of such hard material that engraving had turned out to be impossible and our cheques were returned. I have now written to the CO to arrange for my son's name to be added to the ship's bell. – Lt Cdr P. Gibbs, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington DC



Say it with seashells

SAILORS in the 19th century were often separated from their loved ones for years and while they were away would spend hours making special Valentines for wives and sweethearts back home.

The heart-shaped tribute like the one shown here would often be made of sailcloth, soaked in red dye and decorated with seashells. It would then be presented to the loved one on the sailor's return.

Sailors Valentines by John Fondas was published by Rizzoli in the USA in 2002. – D. Watkins, Bangor, Gwynedd

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Helping Hands

Blood, glorious blood



● You won't feel a thing...Crew of Ark Royal with Leeds Blood Centre staff and their mascot Billy Blood Drop

FOR crew of HMS Ark Royal lying back and thinking of England was not such a pleasurable affair when they dropped in on Leeds.

Ten sailors volunteered to give blood when they visited the West Yorkshire city as part of the carrier's celebration of its freedom of Leeds.

Those drained of a pint were organiser POAEM(L) Jason Woods, PO(AH) Paul Ludlam - who collected a badge after donating his 25th pint of blood -

POAEM(M) Colin Edwards, STD Zoe Brennan, CPO(AEA) Johnny Brewer, OMs Steven Watt and Daniel Bennet, AEM(AE) Joe Elliott and Lts Adam Coates and James Holgate.

"Thanks to the Royal Navy and HMS Ark Royal for continuing to promote blood donation among its young men and women - it's particularly beneficial at this time of year when we need donors," said Chris Sims, head of Leeds Blood Centre.

Iron Duke just in the nickel of time

A PERSONAL crusade by Iron Duke senior rating John Davies ended when the frigate visited her affiliated port of Hull.

The chief petty officer decided to collect odds and ends of foreign currency when he heard the Royal National Lifeboat Institution could turn the loose change into sterling to boost their coffers.

He filled a bucket with 25kg of coins, mostly from the Type 23 frigate's drug-busting spell in the Caribbean 12 months ago.

Payback came when Iron Duke sailed into Kingston-upon-Hull to celebrate the freedom of the city.

The warship was ushered into the port by the Pride of the Humber lifeboat, which collected the bucket when it came alongside

P-I-a-y away for Glasgow

CREW of veteran destroyer HMS Glasgow turned into big kids when they were asked to build a playground for needy youngsters.

Sailors spent three days on the edge of the jungle in Sierra Leone creating a play area for some of the orphans of civil war in Freetown, the country's capital.

Locals had cleared the area, but it was up to the Type 42 crew to build a playhouse, swings, climbing frame and monkey bars, plus a roof over them to shelter youngsters from the African heat.

"It proved to be very tiring as relatively easy tasks became much harder when carried out in 40 degrees of African sun," said Glasgow's marine engineering officer Lt Cdr Danny Owens.

Many of the war orphans were present and treated us to a moving song of thanks for our hard work.

"It gave us a chance to rebuild a small part of a country torn apart by civil war and I know for those of us that took part, we will remember it long after the memories of the last run ashore have faded."

Next on Glasgow's African odyssey was a stop-off in Takoradi, Ghana, where senior clergyman Bishop Francis Quashie picked up 20 boxes of gifts.

The ship offered to ferry donations of children's books, toys, clothes, computers, basic medical supplies and a 125cc motorbike on behalf of All Saints Church in Denmead, Waterlooville.

the frigate on the passage up the estuary.

That didn't end the fund-raising during the visit to East Yorkshire.

Iron Duke's Commanding Officer Cdr Peter Carden and crew strolled into the children's ward of the Royal Infirmary to hand over £3,000. The cash, raised by events such as horse racing and beard growing, will help to pay to kit out a sensory room to encourage

● Pass the bucket, please: CPO(WEA) John Davies lowers a pail with 25kg of foreign coins packed inside to the Humber lifeboat



News in brief

■ CHIEF Petty Officers aboard HMS Cornwall helped to refurbish Looe Health Centre through their fund-raising activities.

Members of the CPO mess collected £400 for the centre during the Type 22 frigate's eight-month spell with NATO's Atlantic patrol force last year.

The ship has been a supporter of the Cornish good cause since she entered service 15 years ago.

■ JUNIOR and senior rates at HMS Collingwood are resting their feet after walking from the Fareham base to the capital.

It took LOM Dusty Rhodes, POs Dave Gwilliam and Dickie Byrd and Royal Marine Sgt Simon Smith three days to trek along main roads from the training establishment to the BBC's studios in London for Children in Need.

Their walk was part of a concerted effort by the maritime warfare centre to support CIN.

Activities included fancy dress events, swearing boxes, weight guessing, leg waxing (for men) and a reggae coffee morning. The base raised £3,886.

Collingwood sailors have also been collecting for more local good causes, notably Fareham Social Services who received Christmas hampers crammed with food and drink to hand to the town's elderly and infirm residents.

■ CREW of HMS Manchester helped the Red Cross in Montserrat move to new premises during the destroyer's recent patrol of the Caribbean.

Sailors also found time to renovate a school for autistic youngsters in Curacao and revamp a children's home in Trinidad during breaks from drug-busting operations.

■ STAFF at RNAS Culdrose jumped into the pool in the latest round of events to bolster the funds of the base's nursery.

Bosses of Helitots are determined to raise £10,000 to improve day care facilities for offspring of sailors and airbase employees.

A group of Culdrose staff cheered on by Helitots youngsters took to the pool for a sponsored swim which fetched more than £300.

The planned revamp of the nursery includes a conservatory and safety play kit with a soft matting surface.

■ THE GRAPEVINE Activities' Centre at HMS Sultan have revamped the engineering base's cyber cafe to cope with demand at the Gosport establishment.

Grapevine was set up 13 years ago by Naval chaplains to oversee leisure activities for sailors.

The new 'Matrix Reloaded' cafe features seven PCs linked to the internet via broadband.

■ YOUNGSTERS at the Puffin Pre-School Nursery for Portsmouth Naval families were knocked for six by sailors on Whale Island.

Trainees on the Initial Regulators' qualifying course at HMS Excellent took a break from studies to take the four- and five-year-olds ten-pin bowling at Portsmouth's Gunwharf Quays leisure complex.

Not only did the sailors treat the youngsters to a night out, but they raised more than £300 in the process, money which will be ploughed back into the nursery to provide new toys.

■ LT CDRs Steve Krosnar-Clarke and Steve Bedelle raised £322 for the Stroke Association when they completed the Great South Run through the streets of Portsmouth.

Lt Cdr Bedelle crossed the finish line in 1 hour and 12 minutes, followed a minute later by his HMS Collingwood colleague. The pair came 704th and 773rd respectively.

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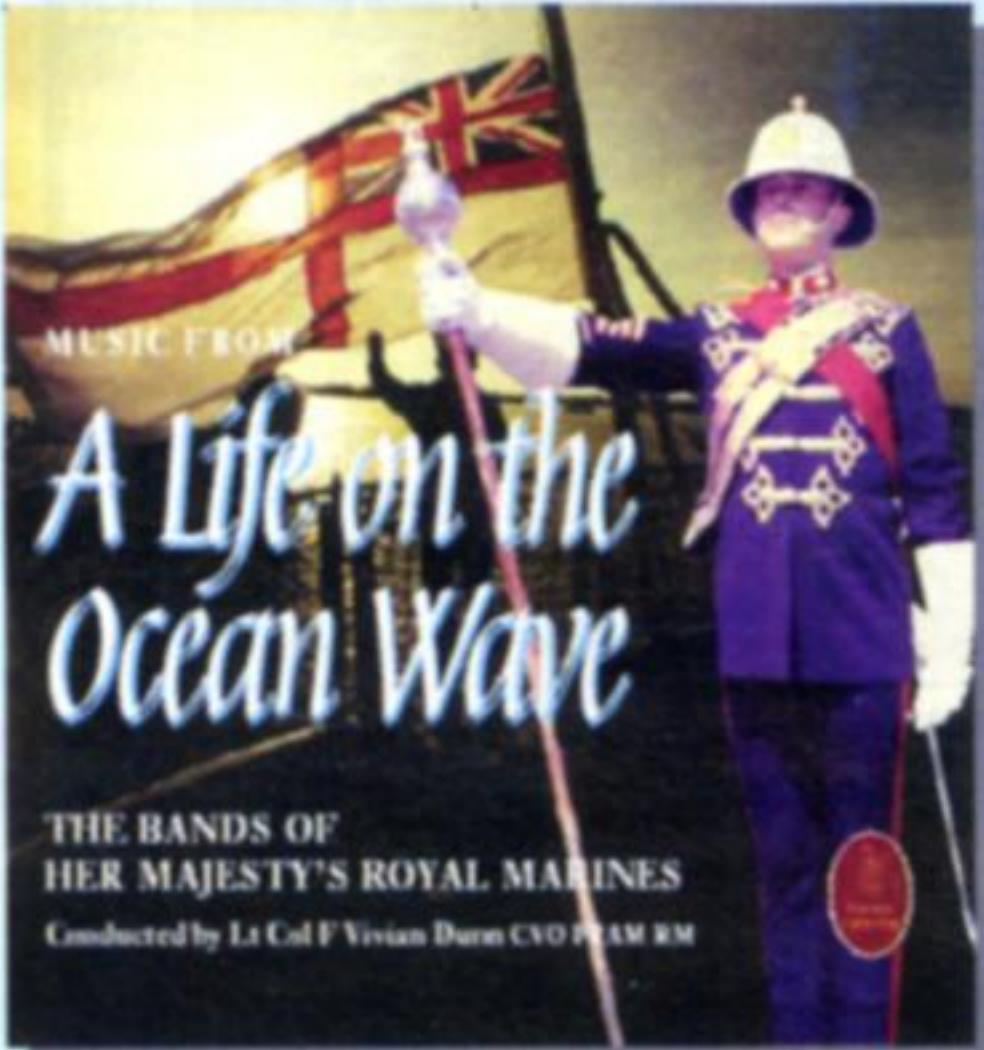
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Sailors' life cycle for good causes

SAILORS in HMS Newcastle, Ledbury and Ark Royal are saddling up for charity cycle rides.

Carrier crew rode from Newcastle to Ark's affiliated city of Leeds when the ship exercised its freedom of the West Yorkshire metropolis in November.

Most of the 10 crew turned cyclists — including CPO(PT) Randle, Flt Lt Armit, CPO(CT) Anderson, LSA Bonell, STD McDonough and WEA Derham — covered the 106-mile road trip in relays. Hardy sailors Lt Coles and CPO(AEA) Weatherall covered the entire distance.

The road trip raised £1,200, split three ways between Children in Need, Hertfordshire Ambulance Service and the National Heart Foundation.

Newcastle's crew are gearing up for fund-raising after receiving five mountain bikes by Halfords in Fareham.

The venerable Type 42 destroyer set off last month on a seven-month tour of duty of the Mediterranean with NATO.

And at most of the ports the Geordie Gunboat puts into, crew will set off on sponsored cycle rides for the ship's charities.

"The bikes are going to be in great demand during our deployment and provide an ideal opportunity for some leisure activities for the ship's company and help to maintain general fitness," said Newcastle's CO Cdr Jeremy Blunden.

And around one third of minehunter HMS Ledbury's crew are riding from the ship's namesake town in Herefordshire to her home port of Portsmouth in support of Ledbury's chosen good cause, Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Around 10-12 crew are lined up for the ride. Anyone wishing to sponsor the marathon ride should contact OM Simon Backhouse on military dial 9385 4596 or 9380 28697.



● Easy riders: HMS Newcastle crew and their new bikes on the destroyer's flight deck, (left to right) Std 'Robbie' Robinson, CO Cdr Jeremy Blunden, CPO(WEA) 'Gabby' Hayes, OM 'Sticky' Green, LPT 'Topsy' Turner, Lt Paul Bastian

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People in the News

Paul's mask leaves them goggle-eyed

EX-SENIOR rating Paul McBride has his eye on a national award after designing a revolutionary pair of swimming goggles.

The former chief aircrewman who now works in the Merlin training facility at RNAS Culdrose is one of three inventors – with his business partner Richard Hockin – battling for the top title in the BBC's Innovation Nation contest.

The Beeb scoured the land for inventions for the competition and received 5,000 entries.

But only three were whittled down by science experts for the final, including the Cornish duo's goggles.

The two inventors came up with the eyewear when a friend complained that his children were struggling with conventional goggles in the pool.



● Inventor Paul McBride shows off his revolutionary swimming goggles

The result is an entirely flexible mask which fits more comfortably around the face and leaks less water. The mask uses revolutionary material which is still awaiting its 'kite mark' from industry experts.

Viewers of the show will decide which of the three final designs is the invention of the year when the show airs later in 2004.

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Patrick plays the generation game

MANY sailors can boast a fine maritime heritage, but none possesses the unique family history HMS Turbulent crewman Lt Patrick Ryan enjoys.

The junior officer is believed to be the first fourth generation submariner in the RN – following his father, grandfather and great grandfather into that once-labelled 'damned un-English' trade.

The casing officer of the T boat based in Devonport earned his dolphins last year – but with nine decades of submarine service preceding him, there was really only one branch of the RN to join.

Ted Ryan set the trend for the Ryan family back in 1909 when he joined HMS A9. He later commanded B5, C3, D1 and E26 before being lost in the latter vessel when she was probably mined in 1916.

A generation later, Lt Pat Ryan also joined the 'trade', serving in H51, L26, Salmon and Trident – the latter as her first lieutenant.

He then joined the ill-starred HMS Thetis during her sea trials and was one of the 99 men lost when the boat went down in Liverpool Bay on the eve of the 1939-45 war.

The third generation of Ryans to earn his dolphins was Cdr Paddy who joined the submarine arm in 1959 and stayed with it for 31 years, commanding four boats in the process including Polaris missile-carrier HMS Renown.

The latest Ryan to wear his dolphins is, says Cdr Jeff Tall, director of the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport and a close friend of Paddy Ryan Snr, a first in the senior service.

The museum should know; it has the most comprehensive personal files on 'deeps' of anywhere in the UK.

"Every submariner wears his dolphins with pride – and Patrick is as aware as anyone of the proud history of the submarine service," said Cdr Tall.

"He is unique as the only fourth-generation submarine officer in the world."



● Like father...like grandfather...like great grandfather...like son. Clockwise from top left, Cdr Paddy Ryan, Lt Pat Ryan, Lt Ted Ryan and HMS Turbulent's Lt Patrick Ryan.



"No other family can claim to have served in 17 classes of submarine – that's just under half of all the major classes in the RN submarine arm – and commanded eight of them."

There's more than just the Ryan name which continues to flourish in the silent service; so too does the ceremony which initiates deeps. Like his predecessors, Lt Patrick Ryan caught his dolphins between his teeth as he knocked back a tot of rum.

Sports lottery provides bags of fun for Simon and Gaby



● Brig Nick Pounds, (left) commandant of CTC RM hands over £1,500 lottery winnings to WO2 Simon Wright – which have already been spent by Simon's wife Gaby

WO2 SIMON Wright and his wife Gaby are the latest beneficiaries of the RN/RM Sports Lottery which dished out some pre-Christmas presents.

The senior NCO based at CTC RM in Lympstone collected £1,500 from the lottery – most of which disappeared in a single day as his wife went on a spending spree.

CO Ian Harding based at Yeovilton picked up an even bigger cheque – £5,000.

When his boss came into his office to tell him the news he feared he'd actually been picked for Christmas duties.

Instead, the senior rating enjoyed a windfall to celebrate with his wife Helen and new son Harvey.

Another £5K winner was Lt Richard Beard from Team Bowman based at Abbey Wood.

The Lottery's handouts have stretched beyond individuals, however.

It has also bought a new 4x4 vehicle for use by Senior Service sporting associations, including hang- and para-gliders, skiers, rowers and bobsleighers, to ferry people and kit to events in and beyond the United Kingdom.

News in brief

■ HMS Shoreham Diver J Carroll picked up the David Murray memorial trophy as the most impressive student on his diving course.

The junior rate arrived at the Defence Diving School at Horseshoe Island in Portsmouth full of promise according to course leaders – and lived up to it.

Experts at Horseshoe said beyond his proficiency as a diver, it was the leadership qualities he displayed in helping weaker colleagues through the course which earned him the title of the class' top student.

■ SENIOR Scottish clergyman the Right Reverend Professor Iain Torrance spent four days with the RN to gain a greater understanding of the service.

Prof Torrance represents the Church of Scotland around the globe – and his remit includes the Armed Forces.

He began his tour of the RN aboard HMS Ark Royal, then jumped ship to HMS Victory to meet Second Sea Lord Vice-Admiral James Burnell-Nugent.

Prof Torrance continued his tour by heading west to the Royal Marine Commando training centre at Lympstone and the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

He finished his visit to the Senior Service at Stonehouse barracks in Plymouth.

He plans to gain front-line experience of the Senior Service with a visit to Iraq later this year.

■ FORMER senior rating Ian White has taken charge of all vessels in his hometown port of Lossiemouth.

The 49-year-old spent 24 years in the Senior Service as a marine engineer, most recently in veteran fishery patrol ship HMS Anglesey.

He has now taken over as harbourmaster in the Scottish port, where he is responsible for more than 50 berths.

Christmas all year round at Culdrose



FOUR thousand hours in the skies flew by for veteran pilot Lt Stephen 'Santa' Christmas whose expertise and dedication to the Fleet Air Arm was rewarded when he brought his Merlin in safely to Culdrose.

814 NAS Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Nick Dunn was waiting for the flier with a celebratory cake to mark the milestone.

In 17 years in the Naval air wing, the officer has clocked up flying time in Sea Kings – AS, AEW and SAR variants – as well as the new Merlins.

'Santa' is currently pilot training officer in the 814 NAS 'Flying Tigers' before joining the Naval Flying Standards Flight in May.

■ Fellow Culdrose flier Roger McDonald also found a cake waiting for him on the tarmac after notching up 10,000 hours in the air – the equivalent of 416 days airborne.

The former FAA pilot now flies Jetstreams with 750 Squadron under contract for Serco Aerospace.

He earned his wings in 1975 and flew the venerable Wessex with Commando squadrons before qualifying as an instructor on Gazelles.

Roger later flew with the RN helicopter display team, the Sharks, and the RN Historic Flight. Outside the Senior Service he has flown for the police, Customs and Excise and air ambulance services.



● Lordy, don't fancy yours much. Nanny Nora - in reality RNAS Culdrose's Gary Wenn - applies the lipstick for the airbase's annual panto. Performances of *Sleeping Beauty* helped the Cornish establishment's theatre club hone their acting skills ahead of the RN's annual theatre festival contest later on this year.

Big brother is watching you, Mark

BROTHERS Mark and Craig Gilbert found themselves serving side by side when the former joined his older sibling's unit for training.

Student flight observer Mark, a 19-year-old midshipman, was attached to 814 NAS when the fliers embarked with RFA Fort Victoria for exercises off Scotland.

His 22-year-old brother, an AEM, joined the Flying Tigers 12 months earlier - and it was his stories of Naval life which encouraged his brother to join the Senior Service.

Mark passed out of Britannia RNC in August and started his basic observer's course at Culdrose last month.

His older brother joined the RN after keeping veteran Russian YAKs airborne in Bedfordshire as he trained to become an air mechanic.

● Brothers in (Fleet Air) Arms: Craig (left) with his younger brother Mark aboard Fort Victoria



Carla answers Wrens' call

THE bright face of HMS Cumberland sailor Carla Rich is the new image Wrens past hope will generate interest among Wrens present in their association.

Carla features on the cover of Wren magazine as well as promotional literature aimed at bolstering the numbers of the Wren Association.

Leading Aircraft Controller Carla served in HMS Illustrious during the campaign to drive the Taliban out of Afghanistan in 2001-02.

She learned she was eligible to join the association - as all women in the Senior Service are - during a visit to London's Imperial War Museum which was hosting an exhibition on women's role in wartime.

Carla's aunt Phyllis Lee was among the first Wrens to serve with the Ultra codebreakers at Bletchley Park, cracking Nazi Germany's messages and orders.

Since then the leading hand, currently serving in the Devonport Type 22 frigate, has agreed to appear in the association's promotional push.

Although the prefix 'Wren' has been formally abolished in official RN parlance, the word remains in common usage by male and female sailors past and present.

Details on the association on 0207 932 0111 or www.wrens.org

● (Left) LAC Carla Rich alongside HMS Cumberland

Ted revives legacy of the mighty Hood

ONE of the greatest names in Royal Navy history is to be resurrected with the return of the 'mighty Hood'.

The title has been given to one of the new support blocks at the growing maritime warfare school in HMS Collingwood.

No ship has borne the name since the battle-cruiser HMS Hood - the epitome of the senior service in the inter-war period - was lost with all but three lives in a calamitous clash with Bismarck in May 1941.

Naval leaders decided it was time to bring one of the greatest names in RN history back after six decades.

Ted Briggs, the sole living survivor of the sinking of Hood, performed the honours as the first earth was cut on the block at the Fareham establishment.

The Hood block will house the dental, medical and personnel centres backing up training given at the Maritime Warfare School.

● Ted Briggs, spade in hand, cuts the turf to prepare the way for Hood block at HMS Collingwood



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Seven months, 1,266 saved and one nation anything but routine



● Nice flares: (Above) A Sea King HC4 fires off counter-measures in practice manoeuvres avoiding possible missile attacks and (right) a cockpit-eye view of the 'lush' Iraqi terrain around Basra

Pictures: Royal Navy Photographers and Patrick Allen

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FROM the sands of the desert to the wreck-strewn waterways of southern Iraq, the Jungles of 846 Naval Air Squadron have seen it all in seven challenging – and rewarding – months bringing stability to a nation ravaged by Saddam Hussein's tyrannical regime.

The Fleet Air Arm men and women joined counterparts from the RAF and Army as part of the Joint Helicopter Force (Iraq), supporting efforts to stabilise and rebuild the war-torn nation.

846 arrived in theatre after the war-fighting operations had concluded last May to take part in Operation Telic II – the post-war peacekeeping effort.

Five Sea King HC4s headed to the Middle East accompanied by around 70 squadron personnel to provide air support to the military and civilian forces maintaining order around Basra.

Air ambulance emergencies, VIP 'cargoes', ordnance disposal, check point patrols and missions to clamp down on smuggling and subversive activities were all carried

out in seven hectic months based out of Basra International Airport.

The Yeovil-based unit was ordered to provide two Sea Kings for missions daily by the Multi-National Division troops responsible for peacekeeping in southern Iraq.

A third helicopter had to be at 15 minutes' readiness by day and 30 minutes' by night for emergency missions by Immediate Response Teams (IRT) – such as casualty evacuation and airlifting Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams in to minefields and other areas where the remnants of Saddam's arsenal had been found by patrolling forces on the ground.

"During the deployment the IRT crews saved many lives including members of the British Armed Forces, Italian Military Police from the An Nasiriyah bomb and scores of Iraqi civilians," said pilot and squadron press officer Lt Steve Baldie.

"Common tasks during the summer were the rescue of heat stress casualties, as well as numerous mine strikes, gunshot wounds, road traffic accidents and bombings."

Key peacekeeping roles included supporting ground troops by ferrying them around the country, providing aerial support at check



points where soldiers searched vehicles for arms and contraband, and policing vital areas of Iraq's infrastructure such as power and water installations from the air.

There were some unusual requests, too.

"We were asked to fly a walkie talkie to a hostage negotiator – we were the only ones who could do it. We did it, and the negotiations were successful," the pilot said.

And all this was carried out in a far from benign environment.

Lt Baldie said pilots and airmen alike faced huge challenges on the ground and in the air.



● Dropping off... (Above) A Jungle lands troops for a peacekeeping patrol...and dropping in (right) a Sea King parked on the deck of the Big E, USS Enterprise, the US Navy's oldest serving aircraft carrier, in the Arabian Gulf



sorties, 40 people slowly rebuilt – it's for 846 NAS

Engineering teams struggled with temperatures which nudged 50°C by day and rarely dropped below 30°C by night to ensure that at least three of the five Sea Kings remained serviceable for operations daily.

"Some of the maintainers found that they had to immerse their tools in cool water before using them, as they'd become too hot to touch," Lt Baldie explained.

Pilots fared no better. Cockpit temperatures at times hit an awful 65°C – 149°F, and crew still had to control their aircraft which in the desert environment was far from easy.

"You'd think it would be easy flying over a nice, reasonably flat desert and despite the dust it was – by day. But by night, it was a very different story. With the very low light levels, even with night goggles, it was very hard to identify the horizon – which meant it was extremely difficult to tell how high you were."

Lt Baldie said beyond the testing desert environment which meant sorties "at the edge of the performance envelope", the still unsettled nature of life in post-Saddam Iraq ensured the fliers never let their guard down.

"With a real threat of ambush, small arms fire, surface to air missiles, and mine strikes, the crews remained at a high state of alertness on even the most routine of sorties," he added.

The performance of all Fleet Air Arm squadrons in Iraq in the past 12 months has already been praised by independent government watchdogs, who were impressed by the efforts to keep helicopters fit for operations in punishing conditions.

On a human level, it meant extreme dedication and hard work from 846's ground crew.

"During the deployment they completed four main gearbox changes with minimal facilities and comfort."

That's several times more work than would have been carried out on all ten squadron aircraft in a year back at Yeovilton.

"In spite of the dust and sand, the squadron did not lose or change one main rotor blade in the whole deployment – something which plagued operations in Gulf War I and Exercise Saif Sareen in Oman in 2001."

"It's a testament to the professionalism of the engineers that they kept the aircraft airworthy in the field, where hot dusty conditions plagued the helicopters day after day."

The ground team also had the chance for some 'hearts and minds' initiatives; 846's chefs in particular spread the word in Basra schools.

Although the squadron was based in Basra, it didn't remain land-locked throughout the deployment.

It was called upon to aid operations in the northern Gulf, notably flying crucial spare parts to HMS Norfolk to allow the frigate's Lynx to continue anti-smuggling sorties over the sea.

And another Sea King crew was asked to fly a military VIP to a dinner on board the carrier USS Enterprise.

The squadron returned to Yeovilton in December after completing 1,266 sorties, accumulating 1,500 flying hours in the process, and saving at least 40 lives.

As the last Sea King was squeezed aboard an RAF C-17 for transport home to Somerset just eight days before Christmas, the airmen were glad to be leaving...but glad they had made a difference too.

The changes since 846 arrived in May were distinct.

"The country was looking a lot more civilised. Children were running around, going to school. Clean water supplies and power were back to normal," Lt Baldie explained.

"When we first got out there, terrorists were regularly attacking the infrastructure, disrupting water and power – and stealing the piping and cable to make repairs difficult. They were blaming the

Coalition Forces for the problem.

"But the Iraqi people were becoming wise to this after a while. They could see that things were changing."

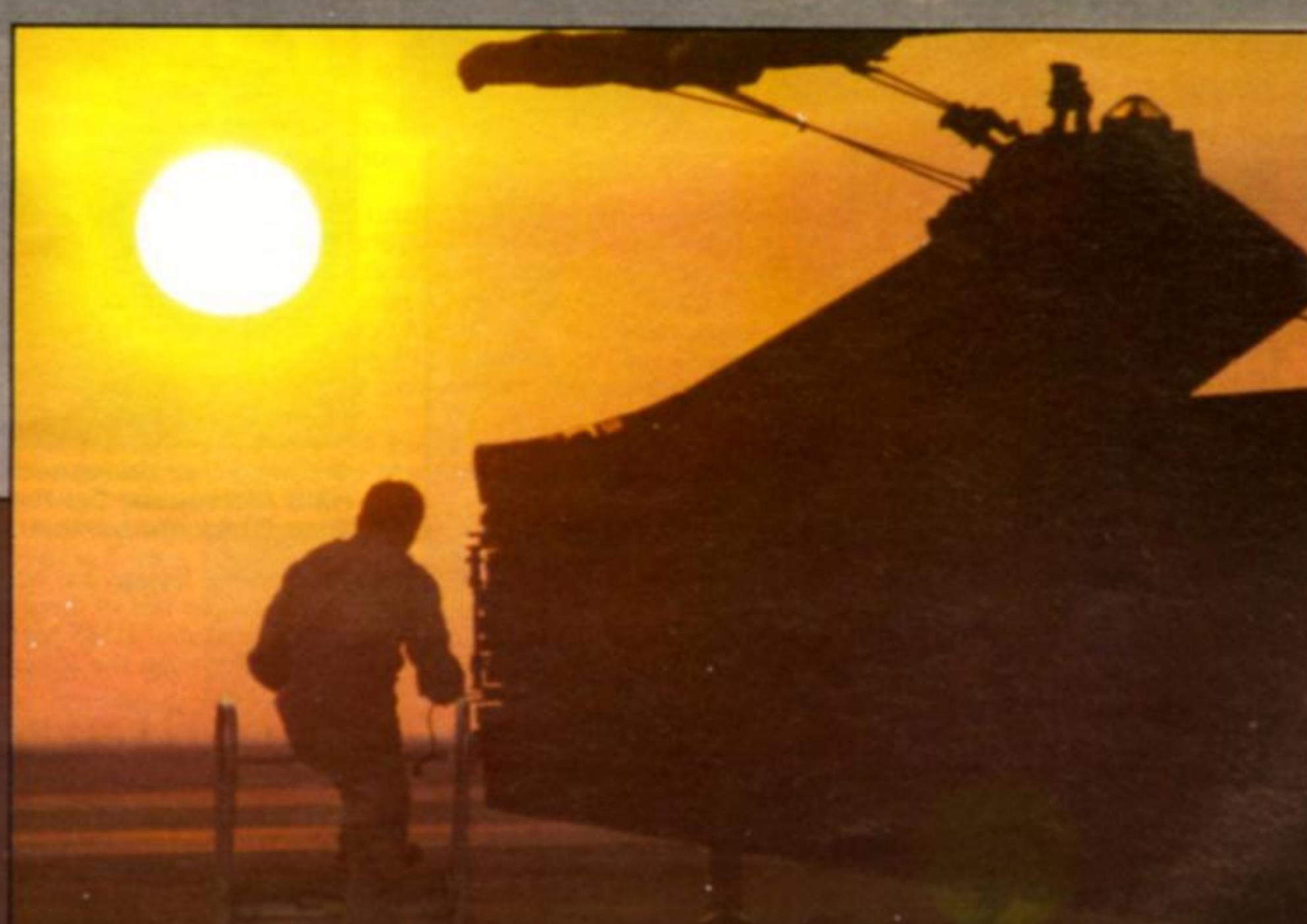
• Stating the obvious:
(Below) 846 engineers ensure the Junglies maintain a high sortie rate in temperatures touching 50°C



• On patrol: (Above) A Royal Marine mans a machine gun as the Sea King scours the desert and (right) British troops duck as a Junglie whips up the desert dust



• The detritus of war and neglect: One of the many hulks blocking the waterways around Basra



• (Above) By the light of the sun an engineer inspects the HC Mark 4 Sea King to ensure flights by day and night and (left) the eerie moonrise in the shimmering Basra night sky

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Last of the Buccaneers put history right



● Last to catapult off Ark Royal IV: Cdr Ken MacKenzie (left) and long-time friend Sqn Ldr Rick Phillips

A SMALL slice of Naval history deserves to be re-written after the last fliers to catapult off HMS Ark Royal marked the occasion 25 years on.

Cdr Ken MacKenzie and Sqn Ldr Rick Phillips – in 1978 a Lt Cdr and Flt Lt respectively – commemorated the last jet launch from the fabled carrier, predecessor to today's Ark.

Despite what many history books say, it wasn't Flt Lt Murdo MacLeod and Lt D McCallum in a Phantom who hurtled down the flight deck on November 27 1978.

Fate – and a few teething problems on their Buccaneer – meant the two friends were the last men to lift a jet up from the deck of the carrier.

An F4K Phantom should have been the last to leave on a sombre autumn day, but problems with Cdr MacKenzie and Sqn Ldr Phillips' aircraft meant the Buccaneer was pulled off the launch list.

"It was a sad occasion," Cdr MacKenzie recalled. "We went off, had lunch and returned on deck to

find we were the only aircraft left."

Unfortunately the photographer had apparently left – there are no known pictures of the final launch, unlike the Phantom which took off earlier.

Minutes later, the Buccaneer was soaring above the Mediterranean.

"It was a great aircraft to fly. We were still enjoying the experience and it certainly doesn't seem like 25 years ago," the Naval officer added.

"We'd been on borrowed time for 10 years. We knew the end was in sight for the fixed-wing aircraft – none of the young pilots were coming through, so the age of 809 NAS was pretty high."

A quarter of a century on, Cdr MacKenzie is believed to be the only fixed-wing observer still serving the RN, although he's firmly rooted on the ground these days overseeing the mammoth task of providing new single living accommodation at Portsmouth Naval Base.

But the flying tradition continues: Sqn Ldr Phillips' son – Cdr MacKenzie's godson – is training as a Harrier pilot.

Navy Days back with a bang

THE Navy's growing emphasis on amphibious warfare will be mirrored by this summer's Navy Days.

Devonport will again be hosting the maritime spectacle over the August bank holiday weekend.

And Naval leaders have picked an amphibious expert to oversee the RN's largest public event of 2004.

Green beret Colonel Steve Cox, who led the commando amphibious assault on the Al Faw peninsula in Iraq last year, heads the small team planning this August's event.

Many details are still to be confirmed given the RN's global commitments, but Naval, Royal Marine and Fleet Air Arm units are all lined up to appear.

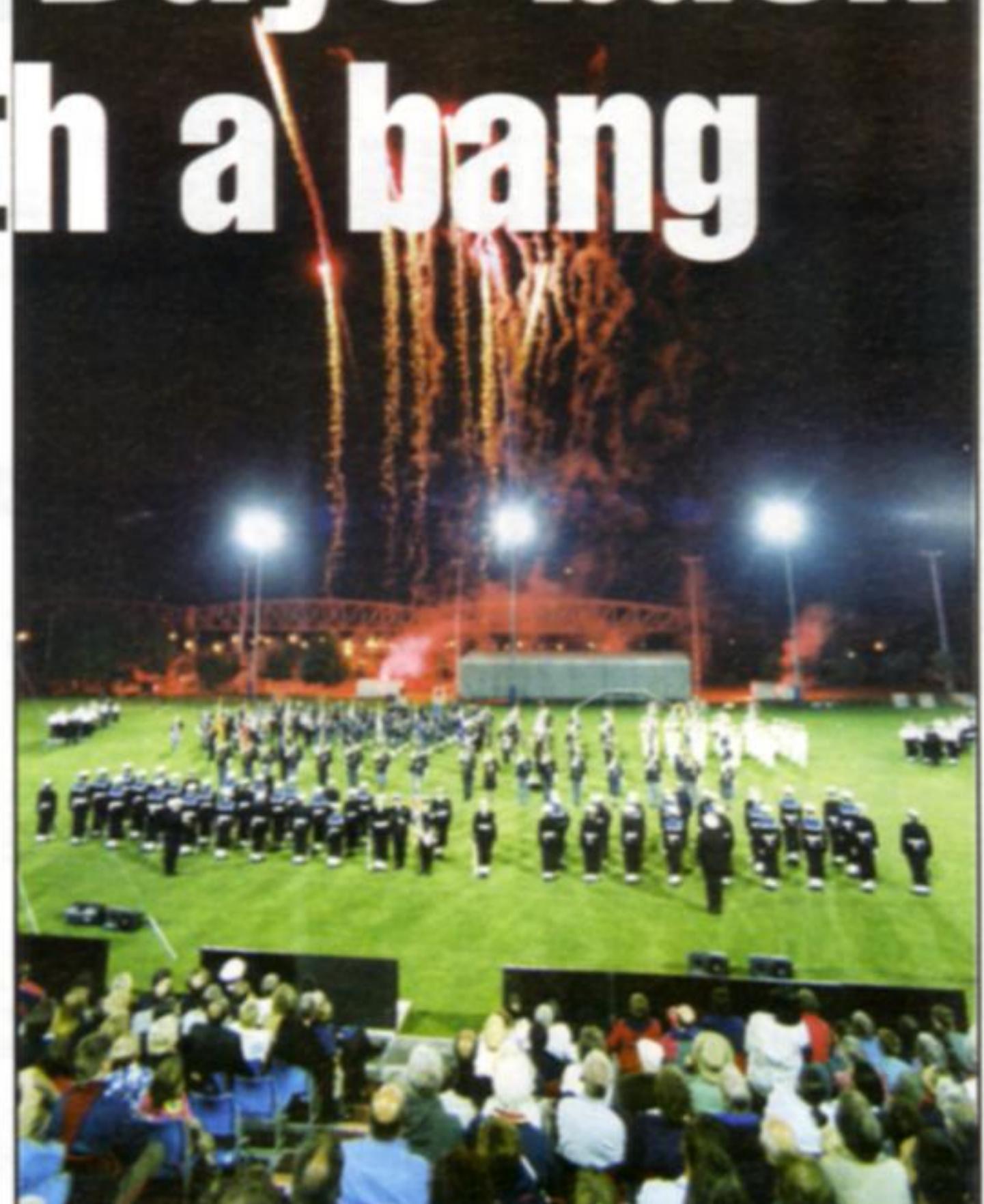
Commitments in Iraq last year meant there was no public display by the RN; Navy Days were last hosted in Devonport in 2002.

Amphibious warfare will be this year's theme, with commandos 'assaulting' targets supported by fast raiding craft, amphibious ships, aircraft and helicopters.

Traditional stalls and displays, military bands will be on hand, ships and submarines will be on display, and there will be the opportunity to visit Devonport's developing heritage area which houses a Field Gun exhibition and relics and treasures from the base's distinguished history, including the Napoleonic-era hangman's cell.

Navy Days is this year's 'RN in the Public Eye' event aimed at opening the Senior Service up to the general public.

It will also commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Normandy landings; many veterans' groups are already lined up to take part in a special event.



● The firework display and tattoo at 2002's Navy Days

"We want to put on a really good show this year," said Col Cox. "It's the general public's chance to meet the men and women who provide a world-class fighting force and to see ships, submarines and aircraft close-up.

"We're also looking forward to welcoming back some old comrades and enthusiasts – there will be something of interest for everyone."

Given the size of Devonport, coaches will run around the base and a water taxi service will link the dockyard with Plymouth's historic Barbican district.

Tickets are not yet available for the August 28-30 event – admission prices are still being worked out – but they should be shortly. More details are available from the information line on 01752 553941.

Angels of Mersey fly the flag



● OM(C) Baz Hearn and LRO Nobby Hall raise the White Ensign in HMS Mersey for the first time in Portsmouth Naval Base, with a Type 23 frigate berthed behind

THE White Ensign has been raised for the first time on the RN's newest warship – the last of three patrol vessels ordered.

The arrival of HMS Mersey in her home port of Portsmouth brings the curtain down on the initial batch of River Class ships ordered from the VT Group.

Sisters HMS Severn and Tyne are already proving their worth on fishery patrols around the UK.

Mersey was officially accepted by the Navy eight days before Christmas, when the Red Ensign was hauled down and replaced by the RN's famous standard.

The trio, all owned by VT in a unique deal which sees the ships loaned to the RN for five years, replace the veteran Island Class vessels which have now been paid off.

The technological improvements in Mersey and her sisters and crew rotation – one third of sailors will be on leave or courses in the UK at any one time – means the River Class ships should be fit for front-line operations on more than 300 days each year.

Mersey will be put through operational sea training off Plymouth this month before beginning her first 'live' patrol next month.

■ Island Class bow out, p30

Rally for vintage FAA flight

VINTAGE cars can help to keep the Navy's most treasured vintage aircraft airborne this spring.

Historic vehicles are needed to rally at West Sussex's legendary Goodwood circuit in April – hopefully raising £3,000 in the process for the RN Historic Flight.

Up to 50 cars will hurtle round the race track, park up for spectators to inspect, and parade in procession.

Spaces are available for car owners who fancy showing off their vehicles – the emphasis is strictly on older cars or those not normally seen at rallies – in the April 7 event.

A track day will see vehicles including Austin Healeys and Triumph TR7s driving at speed around Goodwood – providing they do not exceed the 98 decibel sound limit.

Passengers will be able to ride in the cars providing they make a donation.

Cars can also drive around Goodwood on slower parade laps for just £20 per vehicle.

Previous events arranged by organiser Christopher Darwin have raised upwards of £4,000 for good causes including prostate cancer treatment and the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society.

Money from April's event will specifically be used to keep the historic flight's Swordfish in tip-top condition.

Details on the rally are available from Mr Darwin on 01403 783458 or c.darwin@virgin.net

Clear grey skies for Endurance

THIS stunning black and white image by HMS Endurance's photographer LA Phil Wareing captures the unspoiled beauty of King Edward Point, South Georgia, latest stop on the ice ship's annual deployment.

The Portsmouth-based survey vessel, affectionately known as the Red Plum because of her bright livery, is continuing to live in the shadow of legendary explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton.

In last month's *Navy News* we reported how the ice ship's Royal Marine detachment retraced Shackleton's epic trek to salvation across South Georgia nine decades ago.

The Shackleton theme continued when other crew paid their respects to the Antarctic explorer, laying a wreath at his remote grave.

Endurance spent Christmas and New Year around South Georgia, continuing her survey mission alongside the British Antarctic Survey vessel James Clark Ross, which kindly delivered mail to the Red Plum.

The warship will visit South Africa and Tristan De Cunha before returning to the UK for refit in May.



● Deputy supply officer Lt Sarah Boardman pays her respects at Shackleton's grave and (below) in colour at King Edward Point, HMS Endurance in the foreground with RSS James Clark Ross

Pictures: LA(Phot) Phil Wareing





● Overlay of Gibraltar made from 18 individual digital images, 'stitched' together using imaging software. The whole image was captured and transmitted back to the UK in well under an hour

Digital wizardry aids intelligence

THE APPLICATION of digital technology is placing Royal Navy submarines back at the cutting edge of intelligence gathering – a role they have fulfilled to varying degrees since the earliest days of the Submarine Service.

In addition to their more traditional roles – stalking and destroying enemy vessels, and more recently, bearing responsibility for the national nuclear deterrent – submarines can be deployed to covertly collect intelligence information of shipping or enemy coastlines and installations.



● (Above) A Sea King helicopter hovers over a stormy sea – and a rolling, pitching submarine was a far from ideal platform from which a photographer could snap a clear image

● (Below) A Buccaneer low-level bomber is caught on camera in a classic example of periscope photography from Swiftsure-class nuclear submarine HMS Spartan

One of the most efficient ways of gathering this intelligence is using photography – a picture tells a thousand words.

Each RN submarine is obliged to have a team of trained personnel, known as the Periphotos, on standby to capture imagery, usually at sea, through one of the submarine's two periscopes.

Traditionally they used 35mm cameras with black-and-white film, but developing film on board a cramped submarine was far from easy.

Developing high-quality negatives requires a dust-free, well-ventilated environment, and uses several different chemicals.

In order to produce prints from these negatives, darkroom techniques also had to be mastered by the Periphotos teams.

Training for the Periphotos role was undertaken at the Photographic Sections at Faslane or Devonport, where the one-week courses covered camera handling skills, negative processing,



● An overlay of HMS York in Gibraltar, constructed from six individual images and 'stitched' together using software. This image took less than an hour to capture, build and transmit back to the UK by PO(PHOT) Richard Harvey, the Navy's Periphotos specialist, who also took the panoramic picture (top)



printing and special techniques.

Standards were – and still are – maintained through inspections by Navy photographers and Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) staff.

Although the results achieved by a skilled practitioner (as demonstrated on this page) could be spectacular, one of the biggest

drawbacks of using 'wet film' techniques was the time-lag.

Very often the photographs could only be analysed by intelligence staff after the submarine had returned to port, which could be weeks after they were taken.

But advances in digital photography, when married to modern

communications capabilities, means that intelligence information can be with the right people within minutes rather than weeks.

Digital cameras capable of being fitted to periscopes, the provision of imaging software, and satellite communications means that submarine intelligence is almost instantly available.

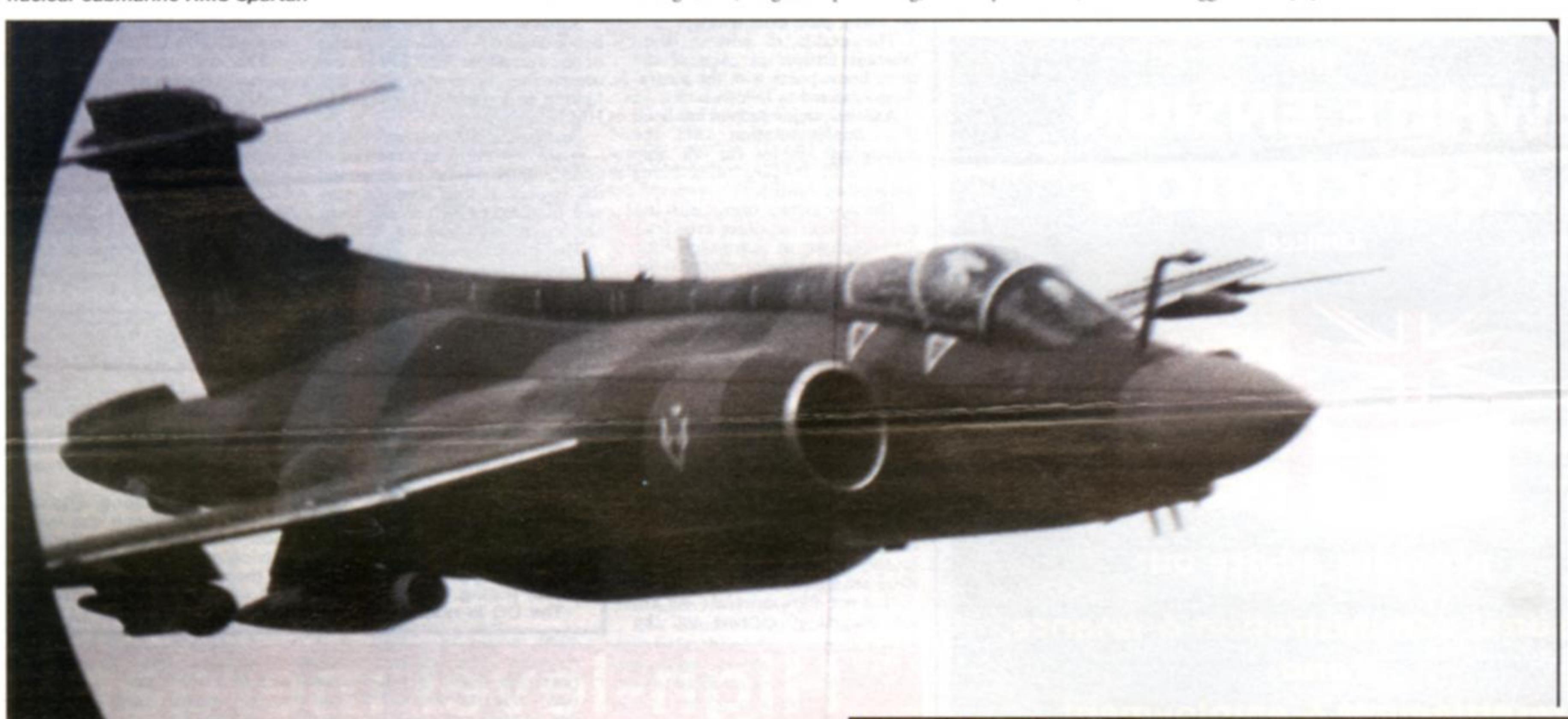
Trials have recently been conducted by Periphotos specialist PO(PHOT) Richard Harvey, using HMS Turbulent in Gibraltar, where digital images were captured through the periscope and the images transmitted back to the UK in less than an hour.

Imaging software and hardware were also tested, and allowed up to 18 images to be 'stitched' together to form one seamless high-quality panorama of the coastline.

Each image was also of a high enough quality to be capable of being analysed independently.

The lessons learned in this trial are to be included in a new Digital Periscope photography course, currently being developed, and standard digital operating procedures are also being laid down for the Periphotos teams of the future.

Equipment on board Swiftsure and Trafalgar-class submarines is now being adapted to accept a digital camera, with the ultimate aim being to provide all periscopes with a digital photography capability.



Boats finished with the wet stuff

FABLED submariner Lt Cdr Martin Nasmyth VC is believed to have provided the first operational wartime periscope photograph in E11 during one of his daring patrols in the Sea of Marmara in Turkey.

The grainy picture may have had limited intelligence value, but it ushered in an important role for the fledgling Submarine Service.

And now, using digital technology, submarines are again at the forefront of intelligence gathering.

Cdr Bob Fancy, Commander Devonport Flotilla, is well-qualified to talk on the subject – when commanding HMS Trafalgar in 2001 his was the first boat to use digital periscope photography on an operation.

"The benefits are almost self-evident," said Cdr Fancy.

"A digital photograph can be analysed on the

spot on computer, and if it is not good enough you can take it again – periscope photography can suffer from wave interference.

"From taking the picture and analysing it to sending it back can take less than an hour."

"With wet-film techniques it could be three months before the picture could be delivered."

Cdr Fancy said digital work also meant chemicals did not have to be carried on board, nor special darkroom techniques taught to sailors.

"It is an example of the importance of the modern submarine as an intelligence asset," he said.

"It is a huge leap forward. After the Cold War some people were asking what role submarines had to play – with Tomahawk missiles and the intelligence value of digital images, there is a growing realisation that submarines are a vital asset."

● In the beginning (right): This is believed to be the first operational periscope photograph – a hazy shot of the skyline of Constantinople taken through the periscope of E11, commanded by Lt Cdr Martin Nasmyth VC in World War I

Picture: Royal Navy Submarine Museum



Second Sea Lord drives through changes to help support the Divisional System

It's what your left arm's for!

A RETURN to the traditional role of the Divisional Officer (DO) is the promise of the Second Sea Lord as he reviews his first year in office – and looks far into the future.

Vice Admiral James Burnell-Nugent believes there is plenty of cause for optimism at the steps that have been taken in recruitment and retention, and that the introduction of Executive Warrant Officers (EWOs) and the

Squad System has brought material benefits.

But his main focus for the next six months or so is an overhaul of the Divisional system – or “the Navy’s world-class model of how to get people to give of their best,” according to the Admiral.

Command Warrant Officer (CWO) Eddie Seaborne said: “The Divisional system has been around for a long time. It’s a tried and tested system, but it’s now creaking at the seams. We have got to get on and do something about it.”

Admiral Burnell-Nugent said: “I think people realise that the

Divisional system has been drifting more and more towards administration – typing reports and so on.

“All right, admin work has to be done, but I want to change the emphasis of DOs’ work to walking the patch and putting even more effort into getting to know their people.”

A series of roadshows is planned for March and April to explain the Admiral’s vision for the improved system, which will encompass changes to courses and promotion boards to help underpin the role of the DO, whether an officer or a senior rate.

“We looked at syllabuses of command courses and it’s all about administration – we want to change that towards the leadership and pastoral side of things.

“Old instructions to promotions boards (officers and ratings) are about technical skills. There is not much about the leadership side.”

In future, 2SL wants boards to ask themselves not just if the candidate has the technical skills – does he or she have the leadership skills as well, in order to help with their charges’ careers as well as fostering the teamwork which is the bedrock of the Navy’s philosophy.

“We are putting more emphasis on the left arm – the right arm has the trade badges, but the left arm has the leadership skills,” he added.

The Admiral believes the DO should not be seen as the fount of

all knowledge, but as someone who knows where to find the answers.

“DOs were expected to know all the rules when Eddie and I joined the Navy, when there were just three books. But now there’s a veritable blizzard of information.

“The DO wouldn’t have all the answers himself or herself – but he or she needs to know how to get that info and who to go to.”

2SL’s Personnel Liaison Team will also be more focussed on supporting the Divisional system, and their title is likely to be changed to reflect that.

The Admiral and his CWO have spent a good deal of the past year meeting Service personnel and their families around the ships and bases, and Admiral Burnell-Nugent is grateful for the frankness of the views which have been given.

The fast-track access opened up to the Admiral by the appointment of Eddie Seaborne, reflecting the role of the EWO now installed at each base and on each ship, prompted Admiral Burnell-Nugent to commend the scheme to the Naval Base Commanders.

The result is now a Base Warrant Officer at each of the three home ports, with the air stations expected to follow soon.

Another major success has been the implementation of the Squadding system for all able rates, with leading rates being included by April 1.

The new system brings with it a chance to iron out other wrinkles – management of harmony time from the most junior rating to the First Sea Lord is now possible, with the introduction of the 660/3 separated service threshold from April 1, and each individual will be able to organise his or her life with greater confidence through personal plans.

This in turn allows opportunities for sport and adventure training to be identified well in advance, and the Admiral believes the benefit of this is already being seen in the performances of Navy teams.

The perennial problems of recruitment and retention are still causing headaches, but even here there are signs of improvement.

“It’s not all wonderful – we are still dogged by gapping and the



● Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral James Burnell-Nugent and Command Warrant Officer Eddie Seaborne chat to OM Paul Ely, MEM Michelle Lucas and OM Darren Howell on the bridge of new patrol ship HMS Severn

Picture: PO(PHOT) Gary Davies (2SL)

black hole caused by a block on recruiting in the early 1990s,” said the Admiral.

This has led to a shortage of leading hands across all specialisations, with certain branches particularly hard hit, although the problem is not confined to that particular group.

But a combination of financial incentives and the filling of gaps with full-time reserve service personnel has released some of the pressure – for the first time in ten years, for example, there were enough seaman officer volunteers for the Submarine Service, so no one was drafted in.

And the Admiral is pleased with recruitment figures, which – apart from one or two problem areas such as medical ratings and RM Bandsman – are “healthy”.

“The gap between the numbers we have and the numbers we need is still there – but it is closing,” said the Admiral.

Training wastage is another area being targeted – almost a quarter of new recruits at Raleigh were not completing the course, and that figure rose to nearly 40 per cent at HMS Collingwood.

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Fitness test for the relevant age and gender, has had a major impact, with drop-out rates at Raleigh falling back to 13 per cent and at Collingwood to 23 per cent.

“The figures are still too high, and we have got to keep working at it, but it makes a major difference,” said the Admiral.

“And if more people are coming through into ships and front-line units, we don’t have to recruit so many.”

Allied to this is a drive to get sailors back to work more quickly after suffering injuries.

Many people on lowered medical categories are there as a result of domestic or sporting injuries, so the Admiral has put £500,000 a year – a sum matched by the MOD – into accelerating the rehabilitation process.

PTIs have also started rehabilitation instructor courses, so that the Naval Bases and air stations will have staff who can act almost in the role of personal fitness instructors for those medically downgraded.

POMAs have also been placed in Waterfront Manning Offices and have proved a valuable asset.

This will not only help avoid gapped billets – it will also bolster each individual’s self-esteem.

Other initiatives well under way are the Fleet-led Rebalancing Lives programme, which has strong support from 2SL’s department, and new single living accommodation (SLAM) which will provide sailors with modern spacious quarters with en-suite facilities while ashore.

■ Smiles – p20

New ships, new skills

ONE MAJOR concern for Admiral Burnell-Nugent is the supply of personnel for ships which have not even left the drawing board.

“The junior rates in the Navy now will be the senior rates, and hopefully the officers, of the future carriers, Type 45 destroyers and Astute-class submarines,” he said.

The key is getting sufficient people with the right balance of skills – and that can be a problem when the skills of the future are only just becoming apparent, if

they have appeared at all.

“They may need skills in ten years time we haven’t even thought of yet, so we have got to get structures in place now so that the Navy can deliver the capability the Government wants in the future.”

The career structure also needs to reflect the different ambitions of the individuals; some may want to rise up the ladder, while others are content to stay put at a certain level.

All have to be accommodated, said the Admiral.

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Division adds value

THE DIVISIONAL system has been an integral part of the Royal Navy for centuries.

Within an establishment or ship, the ship’s company is divided into departments based on branches, and (depending on the size of the unit) into divisions, each of which has a Divisional Officer (DO) and a Divisional Senior Rating.

The DO is responsible for

the welfare, administration, training and general efficiency of everyone in the division, and is expected to get to know his or her charges well.

The Senior Rating acts as a conduit between the division and the DO, offering advice and help to members of the division to either sort out a problem or take it further through the DO.

High-level merger under consideration

A POSSIBLE merger between the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief Fleet (CINCFLEET) and Second Sea Lord (2SL) is being investigated.

The two organisations – CINCFLEET has responsibility for the Fleet while 2SL looks after personnel matters – are working increasingly closely together.

And now First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West has set CINCFLEET and 2SL the task of investigating the scope for merging to form a single entity by 2006.

The scheme is acknowledged to be ambitious, with “the aim – if feasible – being to create a single top quality, efficient, responsive headquarters structure to take the Navy into the future.”

The project is in its initial stages, and requires close co-operation with other groups, including the Ministry of Defence Head Office and the Warship Support Agency, before the shape of any possible new organisation becomes clear.

Work will only proceed if the First Sea Lord is certain that proposed options would fit in with other top-level defence management changes and would serve the Royal Navy better than the current structure.

The basic assumption at the outset is that CINCFLEET will remain at the top of any new organisation, while 2SL would have a distinct role as Principal Personnel Officer and personnel adviser to the Navy Board, with direct responsibility to First Sea Lord in that field – but nothing has yet been decided.

The two existing headquarters are close to each other in Portsmouth, and one strand of the investigation will be to see if there is further scope for collocation – although this will not have any impact on Fleet’s plans to occupy the new Leach Building on Whale Island next summer.

As proposals are firmed up and work proceeds, staff and trade unions will be consulted and invited to take part in the process.

At Your Service



Over to You

The Cod War: Seeking anecdotes from anyone who has had any dealings with the Cod War. If you have any memories contact Capt Andrew Welch RN Retd, The Anchorage, 22 Grand Parade, West Hoe, Plymouth, PL1 3DP, tel: 01752 663437 or email: aw01882061@blueyonder.co.uk

HMS Eagle: Seeking CREA Margetts, HMS Eagle 1970-72. Malcolm Margetts is doing a genealogy one-name study and would like to make contact. Contact Malcolm at 30 Ashburton Rd, Gosport, PO12 2LL, or email: e.m.mabbin@btconnect.com

Faslane Drama Society: In 1982 Surg Lt Stuart Lloyd was the musical director for a performance of *Orpheus in the Underworld*. At the time someone took a video of it and he would dearly love a copy of that video. Contact him at 19 Viking Rd, Stamford Bridge, YO41 1BS, tel: 01759 371972 or email: stullloyd@doctors.org.uk

HMS Forrester H74: Whilst out selling poppies for the RBL, James Aries lost his 50th Anniversary Battle of the Atlantic badge. Can anyone help him find a replacement, or

a 60th Anniversary badge. Contact James Aries, 20 Grange Rd, Toddington, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 6BZ.

Temp Lt Cdr George Herbert Goodman GC MBE RNVR: served at HMS Vernon, HMS Nile and HMS President. Awarded the GC for bomb and mine disposals in North Africa. Assisting the disposals were PO William Filer RN and painter Archibald Russell RN, both of whom received George Medal. Mark Goodman (George's cousin) would like to contact Filer and Russell, or anyone who knows of them, and anyone who knew his cousin, who was killed in a booby-trapped house in Holland in May 1945.

Contact Mark at 18 Roseau Crescent, London, SW11 4RZ, tel: 020 7223 6118, email: poosog@btconnect.com

HMS Manchester: George Louis Robertson served as Radar Operator in Manchester during Op Pedestal; he also served in Taranto and Campagna. George died in 1978, but his son George is researching that time of his life. If anyone served with George or served in the ships at the same

time could they contact his son George Robertson, 10 Hazelcroft, Werrington, Peterborough, PE4 5Bj, tel: 01733 761059 or email: GeorgeRobertson@btconnect.com

Motor Torpedo Gunboat 5518: Peter Waterhouse is seeking any pictures including her badge and/or stories from her build to when she was disposed of. Contact Peter at 14 Kedlestone Ave, West Park, Plymouth, PL5 2NE or tel: 01752 367624.

ML 162: Mr D. Wallace would like to learn more about the escapades of this motor launch during WWII. She is currently being restored to her wartime guise. He would like to hear from anyone who worked on her or served in her. Contact him at 19 Sturt St, Grantham, Lincs, NG31 9AF, tel: 01476 576576.

Naval Landing Brigade: Does anyone have any photos of the last known landing of a Naval Brigade at Valletta, Malta 1951-52? Also does anyone have photos of the Seaman Guard for King George of Greece aboard the Gambia at Athens 1951-2. Willing to pay for any copies. Contact John Harris, 1115 North 35th Street, Renton, WA, 98056, USA or email: johhn5@comcast.net

HMS Pekin: Seeking any info/photos of the Pekin from WWI, in particular regarding Ldg Trimmer William Ferguson Yeoman, who served in her. Contact his grandson, Les Yeoman, 97 Green Park Rd, Plymstock, PL9 8JA, tel: 01752 407274 or email: les@yeoman.freesserve.co.uk

Seeking LS Alan Stokes: driver to Chief of Staff, CinC, Portsmouth 1969-72. Believed to have moved from Oxford/Berks to S.Wales. Contact Mrs Lees-Spalding on 01962 760249

Raymond Doyle: known as Paddy, served from 1954-1976, including Ark Royal (1955-56), Gannet (1956-59), Blackwood (1959-61), Sea Eagle (1961-63), Tartar (1963-64) and Mercury (1964-66). He died in 1985. His daughter Naomi, also in the RN, would like to speak to anyone who knew him. Contact Naomi on 07714 203637 (mobile).

Ulster Aviators: Seeking info regarding detachments in Northern Ireland in the last 30 years or so. Interested in those who flew, operated and maintained the rotary-wing aircraft. Do you have memories/stories? Did unit magazines cover activities? Are there any photos? All material will be looked after and returned if required. Would also like to hear from the first helicopter operators in the Province, those based at Eglington Flying Dragonfly, Whirwind and Wessex, also the Gannet Years. Contact Guy Warner, 4 Farm Lodge Way, Greenisland, County Antrim, BT38 8YA or email: gwarner@btconnect.com

HMS Pembroke: Sheryl Roper seeks Doreen Thomas, served 1941-6. Contact her at 16, Rushmere Rd, Ipswich IP4 4LA, 01473 728081, sheryl.roper@btconnect.com

HMS Diamond 1956-57: John Cook seeks John Jarrold and Ken Vincent, who joined the ship as boy seamen from HMS St Vincent, April 1956. John was best man at John Jarrold's wedding. Write to 56 Grenville Way, Broadstairs CT10 2JR, tel: 01843 867041, email: john@cook6458.fsnet.co.uk

HMS Gloucester: MEM(M) Killner (Killer) looking for LPTI Andy Tutchings, POMEM Pete Morewood, ex-Gloucester 1990-91, also RO Mills, now possibly MAA Mills, from the Manchester 90-91. He now lives in Kuwait with his family and is setting up a

next reunion at The Moat House Hotel, Stratford-on-Avon from May 14 to 16. Contact Peter Lee on 01985 844860 or email: PLee232720@aol.com

HMS Sefton L501, Far East 1945-46: Reunion at Birmingham on May 15-16. Details from Alan Golden on 01746 712630.

HMS Fisgard, Blake Division, January 1944: Fifth Bi-annual and Diamond Jubilee reunion May 17-21. Thoresby Hall Hotel, Ollerton, Notts. Contact Peter Johnson, 01489 577293, email: peterjohn@mlnnet.uk.net

HMS Constance Association: reunion in Peterborough on May 21-22. Details from Ernie Balderson on 01529 413410.

HMS Warspite Association: hold their reunion and AGM at the Rembrandt Hotel, Weymouth, Dorset, from May 21-23. We welcome all who have served in or have any association with the battleship or submarine. More from Ivor Davies on 01752 846983 or Alan Jones on 01752 201583.

HMS Opossum: hold their tenth reunion at the County Hotel, Llandudno, from April 23-26. All serving members of Opossum's six commissions welcome. Details from Eddie Summerfield, 28 Greymont Rd, Limefield, Bury, BL9 6PN, tel: 0161 764 8778.

April

HMS Grenville 1943-7 Association and the 25th Destroyer Flotilla: HM Ships Ursula, Undaunted, Ulster, Urania, Ulysses - reunion in April at Blackpool. Information from J.W. Lund, 12 Denshaw Road, Selsey, West Sussex, PO20 0SJ, tel: 01243 605057.

HMS Mohawk 1939-41 Survivors Association: Final reunion at Burlington Hotel, Eastbourne, Sussex from March 12-14. A warm welcome is extended to all. Details from Bill Willis, 6 Penhurst, Horsell, Woking, GU21 4HP, tel: 01483 772268.

Maralinga Nuclear Tests, Australia 1956-66 - HMS President: All RN and civilian personnel who served at the range are invited to the next RNAA reunion at the RBL Club, High Wycombe on March 14. Details from John Pearcey on 01903 786266 or email: annurj@supanet.com

HMS Cassandra Association: hold their tenth reunion at the Trecarn Hotel, Babbacombe, Torquay from March 26 to 28. New members welcome. Details from Bob Shead on 0114 230 7007 or Joe Ince on 023 9237 5945.

HMS Decoy Association: welcomes shipmates from the last commission 1967-70 to the next reunion at the Trecarn Hotel, Babbacombe, Torquay, from March 26 to 28. Contact Alf Singleton, 42 Uplands Crescent, Fareham, PO16 7JY or email: alf@single42.fsnet.co.uk

HMS Wizard & HMS Cadiz Association: reunion March 26 to 29 in Torquay. Growing membership. All commissions, ranks and rates welcome. Details from Tom Fox, Marocho, Church Lane, Meriden, Coventry, CV7 7HX, tel: 01676 523296.

The Original and Genuine HMS Impregnable Association: are holding their

Association of Royal Navy First Class Divers reunion on June 11 at the Home Club, Portsmouth. All Clearance Divers, past and present, are invited. Details from the Secretary, Troy Tempest, on 01329 847951 or email: mdivers@hotmail.com

HMS Renown Association: reunion at the Moat House Hotel, Plymouth, from September 23 to 26. Contact John Roche, 71 Glenholme Road, Glenholme, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 7JD, tel: 01752 775926

HMS Arrethusa Association: reunion October 8 to 10 in Scarborough. All former shipmates welcome. Details from Tom Sawyer, 1 Manor Drive, Caravans, Flockton, Wakefield, WF4 4AW, tel: 01924 848191 or email: hmsarethusa38@yahoo.co.uk

HMS Vidal, Survey Ship, all commissions: reunion on October 16 at the King Charles Hotel, Brompton Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 5QT. For details contact Dave Parker, 11a Telford Road, Balham, London, SW12 0HW, tel/fax: 020 8673 5392 or book directly with the hotel.

HMS Trafalgar Association: hold their reunion in Portsmouth on 16th October 16. Ship's companies of all commissions and anyone associated with the ship is welcome along with guests. Details from Taff Pugh, 13 Florid Pedrog, Wrexham LL12 7PL, tel: 01978 262956, mobile: 07971 812820.

HMS Highflyer 1945-62: Third reunion in Bournemouth from June 4-7. All ex-Highflyers and families welcome. Details from John 'Ginge' Wingett on 023 9259 3542 or email: highflyer@ejaywing.freesserve.co.uk or visit the website at: <http://ejaywing.freesserve.com/hmshighflyer>

HM ships Glorious, Ardent and Acasta: sunk off Norway, June 8, 1940: a memorial service to commemorate the sinking of the three ships will be held on Sunday June 6 at St Nicholas Church, HMS Drake, Devonport. All former crew, aircrowd survivors, relatives and friends are invited. Details from Vincent Marcroft, 15, Hillside Road, Middleton, Manchester M24 2LS, tel: 0161 654 7630.

HMS Cambrian: A reunion of old shipmates will take place at the King Charles Hotel, Chatham, from May 7-9. Anyone not yet in contact should call Don Macdonald on 01344 774386.

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June

HMS Highflyer 1945-62: Third reunion in Bournemouth from June 4-7. All ex-Highflyers and families welcome. Details from John 'Ginge' Wingett on 023 9259 3542 or email: highflyer@ejaywing.freesserve.co.uk or visit the website at: <http://ejaywing.freesserve.com/hmshighflyer>

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Pub renews link with tragic submarine

A POIGNANT link between the Submarine Service and a pub in the North-East of England has been revived at a ceremony in Gosport.

John Scott, the manager of the Astley Arms pub in Seaton Sluice travelled down to the South Coast to lay a wreath at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum – and to pick up a special bottle of whisky.

The significance of the whisky – Johnnie Walker Red Label – dates back to the first months of World War II, when submarines were based at Blyth, near Seaton Sluice.

On Christmas Eve in 1939 submariners from the Sixth Submarine Flotilla visited the Astley Arms.

One of the seven petty officers, PO Tug Wilson of HMS Seahorse, won a bottle of Red Label in a raffle. As his boat was about to leave on patrol, PO Wilson asked the landlady, Lydia Jackson, to keep his prize until he returned.

But Seahorse, commanded by Lt Cdr Massey Dawson, never came back. She was due to return to Blyth on January 9, 1940, but was thought to have been sunk in one of the many minefields laid by the Germans in the Heligoland Bight.

She was the first British boat of the war to be lost with all hands.

Tug Wilson's bottle remained unopened in Lydia's safekeeping until she retired in 1964, when it went to the RN Submarine Museum.

The Astley Arms has always maintained the link with the Submarine Service, and had a corner dedicated to the relationship with HMS Seahorse.

In 1976 the Commanding Officer of submarine HMS Otter, Lt Cdr Daniel Conley, presented a

bottle of Red Label and a plaque to the pub as a reminder of the wartime raffle prize, but during a recent refurbishment of the pub the 'Otter bottle' and other items were stolen.

John Scott, who took over as manager at the pub last autumn, was determined to restore the links.

He contacted the Submarine Museum towards the end of 2003, and wheels were set in motion.

The result was a long drive South for John and assistant manager Faye Ormston, who both took part in a brief ceremony in memory of the Seahorse – 64 years to the day since she should have returned from her fatal patrol – and to all submariners who died in the service of their country.

Also in attendance was Lt David Filtness, Flag Lieutenant to Rear Admiral Submarines, Rear Admiral Niall Kilgour.

At the ceremony, Jeff Tall, Director of the Museum, said: "Because of the inherent danger, it was essential that during their time in harbour before they risked their lives on yet another patrol, submarine crews were able to relax, rest and play in cheerful and welcoming surroundings.

"This they found in abundance in the town of Blyth, who I know regarded their submariners with great affection, and particularly at the Astley Arms and the pub's wonderful landlady, Lydia Jackson."

Later, Mr Scott was given a presentation bottle of Johnnie Walker Red Label by Rak Angras, a Business Development Executive

from Diageo, the parent company of Johnnie Walker, and the invited guests had a chance to see the original bottle – described by Jeff Tall as "one of the most poignant artefacts in our collection."

"The bottle, in a presentation box, was specially couriered down from Scotland for this occasion," said Mr Angras.

Cdr Tall also presented Mr Scott with a montage of photographs and cuttings about HMS Seahorse.

Mr Scott said the bottle had been a main focal point of the pub, and there was always a lot of interest in the submarine artefacts at the pub.

He said a handful of regulars have been frequenting the Astley Arms since the war, and that they would be "delighted" at the replacement of the bottle and the installation of the montage.



● HMS Seahorse preparing to come alongside in 1939, and (inset) PO Tug Wilson, who won the bottle of whisky



● Faye Ormston, Assistant Manager of the Astley Arms, John Scott, Manager of the Astley Arms, Lt David Filtness, Flag Lieutenant to Rear Admiral Submarines Rear Admiral Niall Kilgour, and Rak Angras, Business Development Executive at Diageo at the wreath-laying ceremony for HMS Seahorse at the RN Submarine Museum

● (Left) Cdr Jeff Tall, Director of the RN Submarine Museum, with the original bottle of Johnnie Walker Red Label whisky, and John Scott with the replacement bottle for his pub, the Astley Arms, supplied by Diageo

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D-DAY 60th ANNIVERSARY Do you have any accommodation you wish to let for these celebrations in June 2004?

Civilian judges to sit in on Naval courts

CIVILIAN 'judges' are to take the place of Naval counterparts at courts martial from now on.

Uniformed Naval judge advocates sitting in Senior Service courts will disappear following a ruling in the European Court of Human Rights.

The role of the judge advocate at a Naval court martial is effectively the same as a judge in civilian crown courts, advising a panel of five officers and sometimes a warrant officer on the 'jury' on points of law.

A qualified civilian judge advocate, not a uniformed Naval officer, will now sit in the position in future court martial proceedings.

The change was prompted after former leading seaman Mark Grieves challenged the courts martial system through the European Court of Human Rights.

Mr Grieves was sentenced to three years' detention, reduced in rank and dismissed from the Service after being convicted in 1998 of maliciously wounding with intent. He was also ordered to pay £700 compensation to his victim.

Judges in Strasbourg ruled that the use of serving Naval officers as judge advocates in courts martial proceedings did not provide a strong guarantee of independence.

They did not, however, quash Mr Grieves' conviction or say that there was any bias shown by the Naval judge advocate in his case.

The Army and RAF use civilian judge advocates, and Defence Minister Ivor Caplin said that practice would also be introduced to the Senior Service.

He said the findings of the European Court had shown that by and large military courts had stringent safeguards to maintain impartiality and independence.

"The system of discipline within the Armed Forces is a vital contribution to their operational effectiveness and their success," Mr Caplin added.

The change to proceedings meant some courts martial scheduled for last month had to be briefly postponed.

The minister stressed: "We aim to cause the minimum of disruption to courts martial – we are reviewing the implications of the details of the judgment as a matter of urgency."

Changes to determine forces pay

THREE different faces will help the Ministry of Defence decide how much to pay servicemen and women in future.

From spring, Professor David Greenaway, a business expert from the University of Nottingham, will chair the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. Also appointed to the group by Prime Minister Tony Blair are Dr Peter Knight, vice chancellor of the University of Central England, and former Cambridge Water managing director Robert Burgen.

The independent body, made up of senior figures from the world of business, trade unions, public services and academics, advises the government on pay and charges for forces personnel up to the rank of commodore.

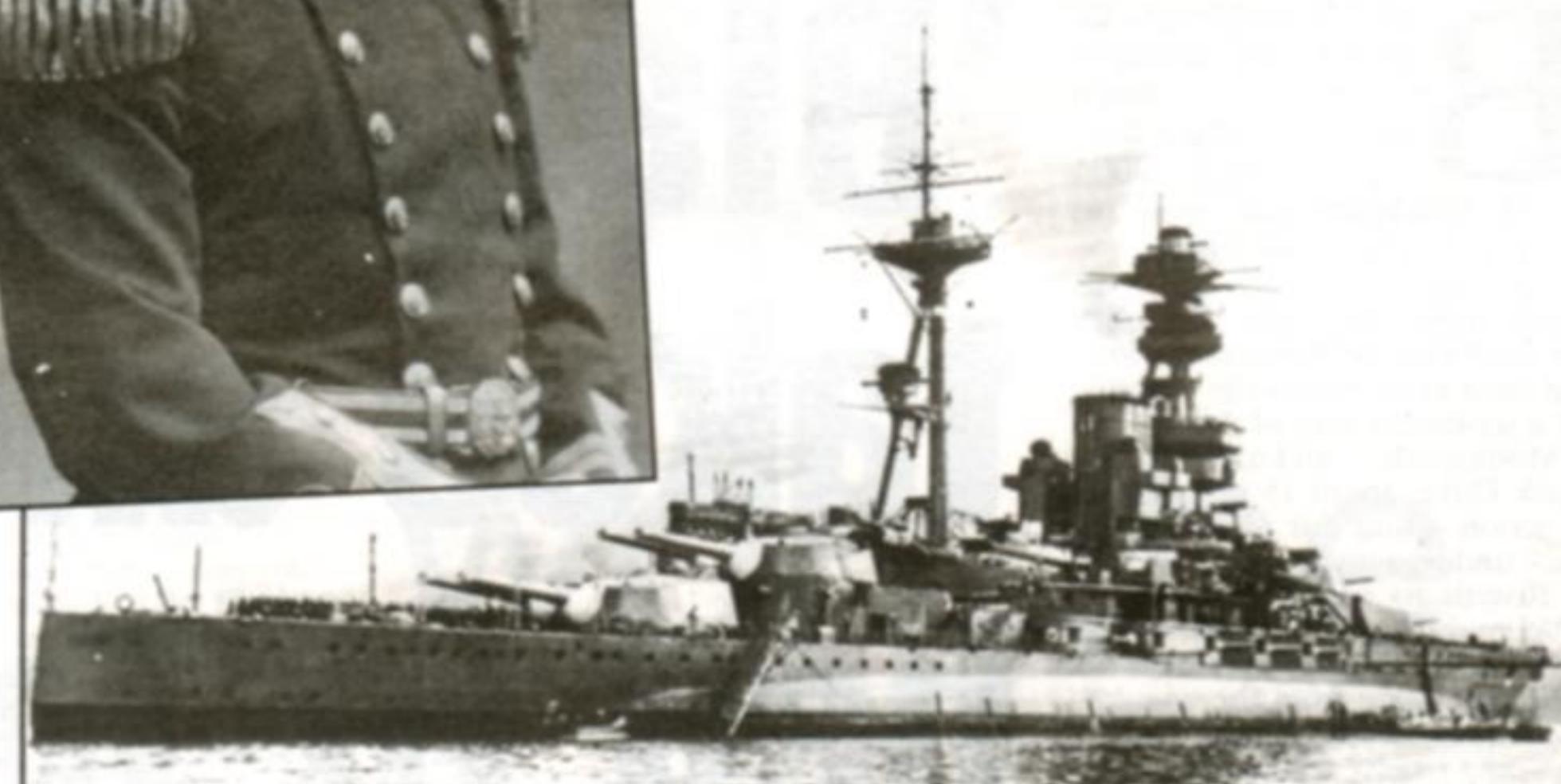
■ RN medical and dental officers will receive a 6.8 per cent pay rise as part of a £14.5m package supporting the Senior Service's medical wing.

The rise – recommended by the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body – brings the total increase to medical and dental officers in the past 10 months to 10 per cent. A 3.2 per cent award was introduced on April 1.

The Review Body has also recommended an increase of 3.225 per cent for medical and dental cadets and an out-of-hours supplementary payment of £8,500 to junior doctors. Its recommendations have been accepted in full and are to be backdated to April 1 last year.



● (Above) David Turner pays his respects at Lyness cemetery in the Orkneys where his uncle, Commander Ralph Woodrow-Clark (pictured left as a lieutenant) is buried alongside some of his Royal Oak comrades. (Below) HMS Royal Oak as she appeared in 1937



Officer's memory lives on in sword



● Lt Karen Jacques, Flag Lieutenant to First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West (centre) receives Lt Cdr Rushbrooke's sword from the officer's widow Ailsa

Picture: PO(Phot) Colin Burden

WHOEVER holds the post of Flag Lieutenant to Britain's foremost sailor will also hold a magnificent sword thanks to the generosity of a Naval family.

Ailsa Rushbrooke, widow of Lt Cdr Peter Rushbrooke, presented her late husband's King George pattern sword to First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West and his Flag Lt Karen Jacques to keep her husband's memory alive.

Lt Cdr Rushbrooke joined the RN at the age of 14 in 1939 and after training in HMS Ajax, Vesper and Volage served as a communications officer in HMS Zephyr and Myngs.

Post-war, he served as Flag Lt to then Flag Officer, Aircraft Carriers.

His sword will be held permanently by the officer appointed Flag Lt to the Chief of the Naval Staff and will be used for the many state and ceremonial occasions he or she is required to attend.

New degree in a Tiffy

ARTIFICERS will earn Foundation Degrees in future as part of a shake-up in qualifications awarded which should better recognise the quality of training RN personnel receive.

The existing award to artificers passing the Career Course, the HND, is being phased out in two years' time, but the Navy has taken the decision now to switch to its successor, the Foundation Degree.

The degree is a two-year course which represents two-thirds of a full honours degree and can only be awarded by universities and higher education establishments.

The University of Portsmouth will oversee the foundation qualifications for electronic and marine systems engineering artificers, and Kingston University will award the aeronautical engineering degree.

Both universities have agreed to back-date the awards which means the majority of artificers currently under training at HMS Collingwood and Sultan will qualify for a foundation degree.

Sailors who have already received an HND cannot instantly 'upgrade' to a degree, however. Their qualifications remain valid and will continue to be recognised by industry.

Artificers who want a full honours degree will have to study for it in their own time on a part-time or distant learning.

Tiffies will also have to find the money to upgrade to honours if they go down that route – although the enhanced learning credit initiative should be able to cover much of the cost.

Details on the changes from Lt Cdr Heather Rimmer on military 9380 26910.

A promise honoured 64 years on

IT took 64 years, but for David Turner a promise made was a promise never to be broken.

On a grim October evening in 1939 the then nine-year-old returned home from school to find his mother sobbing: battleship HMS Royal Oak had been sunk in Scapa Flow, taking with her Commander Ralph Woodrow-Clark, the youngster's uncle.

The boy promised his mother one day he would venture to the Orkneys to pay the family respects. Six decades on, Ralph Woodrow-Clark's nephew fulfilled that pledge.

The battleship, built a generation earlier for the first clash with the German Navy, was torpedoed at the island anchorage by legendary U-boat commander Gunther Prien, who evaded Scapa's defences to attack the dreadnought in U47.

The act of daring, lauded by the Nazi propaganda machine, condemned more than 830 men to their deaths as Royal Oak sank in a matter of minutes.

Many victims remain entombed in the ship's upturned, crumpled hull resting on the seabed; the sea gave up the body of 33-year-old Cdr Ralph Woodrow-Clark five days after the ship sank.

Sixty-four years later, a wreath from his family rests on his grave at Lyness cemetery, the sole officer buried there alongside shipmates from the ranks.

"I made a promise to my mother that I would one day visit his last resting place and that time had finally arrived," said Mr Turner, from Manchester.

"I've been extremely humbled by the whole experience. I thought the cemetery at Lyness was a wonderful place. It's poignant that my uncle's grave is flanked on either side by two crosses marked simply: 'Unknown Sailor, Royal Navy, 1939'."

"I'm glad I went and I've related my experiences to my mother, who's now 93."

Three hundred and 75 survivors were rescued from the bitingly cold Scapa waters; Cdr Woodrow-Clark escaped the sinking only to drown in the sea before rescuers could get to him.

Six decades on Royal Oak's loss rankles with the officer's family; it was a personal and a national tragedy. Cdr Woodrow-Clark was a high-flier earmarked for the upper echelons of the wartime RN, and left behind a widow and son Michael.

"British negligence must have been a root cause for the sinking and loss of life," said Mr Turner bitterly. "It proved Britain's lack of readiness for war."

■ Divers are expected to return to the wreck site later this year to check on oil still leaking from the battleship.

As many as 1,500 tonnes of fuel remain trapped in the upturned ship – less than half the amount believed to have been in her tanks when she sank.

Divers working for the Ministry of Defence visit Royal Oak annually to inspect the leak. Most recent efforts have involved 'hot tapping' the fuel tanks to drain the oil, although the process is slow.

In the past three years, the 'tapping' has drawn 670 tonnes of oil from the ship; it is thought fuel seeps from inner tanks to the outer ones, where it can be drawn off – without damaging the hull or harming its status as a national war grave.

Royal Navy divers also return to the wreck separately each autumn to replace the White Ensign 'flown' on the hulk as a mark of respect.

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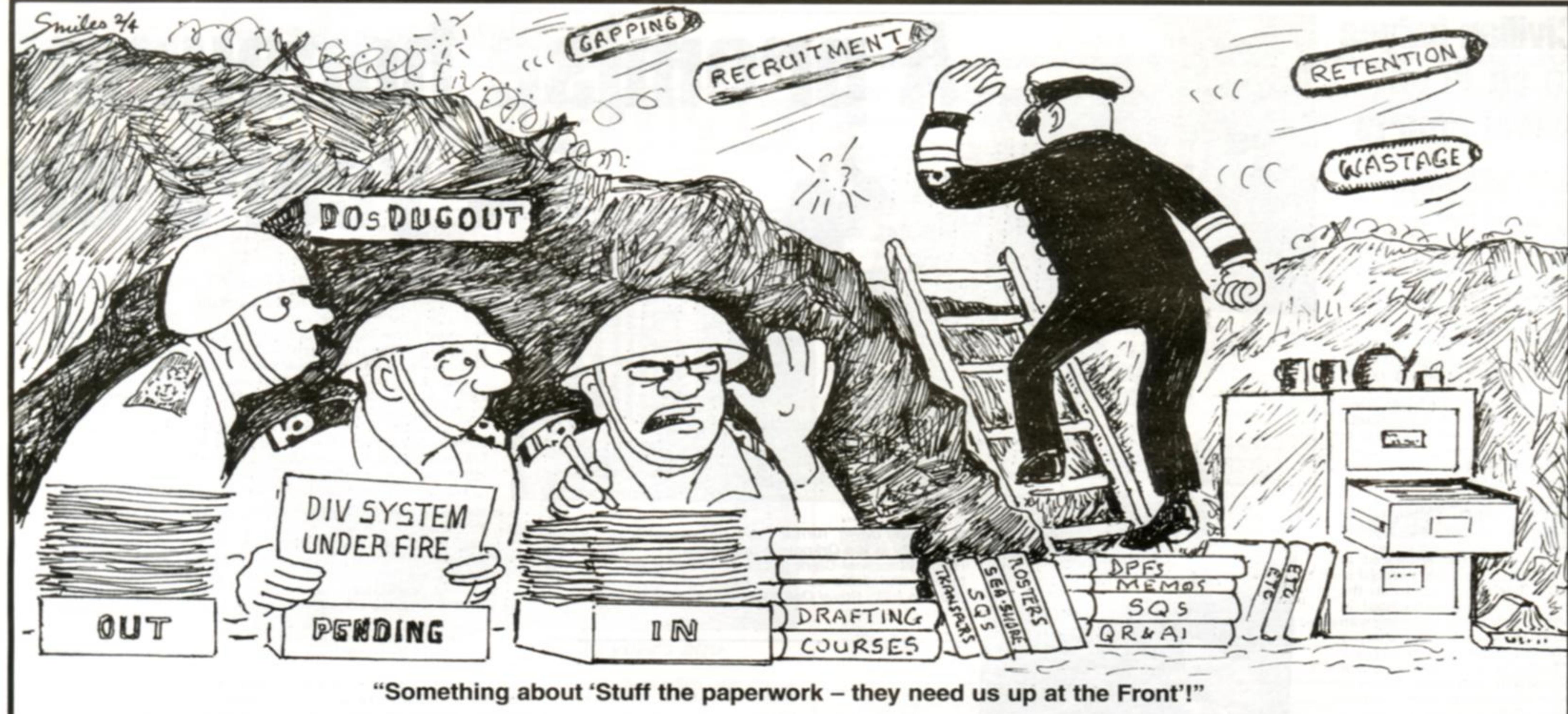
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"Something about 'Stuff the paperwork – they need us up at the Front'!"

NEWSVIEW

Guiding stars in short supply

WHEN you read that no less than 50,000 girls in the UK have been turned away from the Girl Guides because of a shortage of adult volunteers (*Daily Telegraph*, December 29), alarm bells should also be ringing for the future of the nation's cadet forces – one of the Armed Services' chief and best pools of recruitment.

Certainly the Sea Cadets are facing the same sort of problem, if not on quite the same scale.

Blame for the lack of Brown Owls and other Guide leaders is put on changing work patterns and especially on the number of women working full-time.

What the Sea Cadets need are responsible mature people – not necessarily ex-RN – to help as officers and civilian instructors.

It would be a national disgrace if recruiting in the Navy were threatened by a lack of leaders willing to guide youngsters with an interest in the sea and its traditions through their most formative years.

But the pool of men and women with Naval experience willing to do the job is in any case getting ever smaller, so the threat is real.

Parallels with the Girl Guides and the Sea Cadets are worth noting – especially as girls now form 38 per cent of the latter's serving strength.

Both organisations were set up at roughly the same time and both have had to move with the times, both managing the difficult trick of retaining old-style virtues of tradition, discipline and loyalty to Queen and country while changing their badge qualifications to suit the changing interests of the modern Miss.

In the context of the current, commercially-led trend towards turning young pre-teen girls into ever more macabre facsimiles of their adult sisters, this is an achievement we should applaud. But obviously a great many putative 'Britannia's daughters' think the Sea Cadets are cool, too – and they should be given the necessary support to allow their mature attitude to develop.

They can't all be pop stars – somewhat surprisingly, not all of them want to be, either.

Today, as the much-reduced numbers of serving RN personnel mean that still fewer of them can be spared for ceremonial occasions, the Sea Cadets fill the gap admirably – indeed in many of our communities they provide the sole visible expression of the RN ethos. That should be encouraged too.

• TS Lightning Doncaster unit's Girls Nautical Training Corps (absorbed into the Sea Cadet Corps in 1992) march past the town's Mansion House in 1946. Today some 38 per cent of the SCC are girls



Ells, bouquets, pomp and ceremony have all been squeezed into a hectic opening to 2004 for HMS Monmouth, now on her way to the West Indies.

Last month saw the Type 23 frigate rededicated, sail to Cardiff, her crew visit her namesake town, and then head across the Atlantic for a six-month tour of duty.

Monmouth, nicknamed the Black Duke, spent 15 months out of action – and out of the public eye – undergoing an extensive refit at Rosyth to overhaul her combat/communications kit, fit a new 4.5in 'Kryton' gun – it takes its unofficial name from the angular-headed Red Dwarf sitcom character – and receive a flight deck and hangar conversion so she can operate a Merlin helicopter.

Ship's sponsor Lady Eaton, who launched Monmouth back in 1991, led dignitaries at the rededication ceremony in Devonport, alongside civic leaders from the Welsh town, and the ship's affiliated RAF and Army units: 70 Sqn and the Queen's Dragoon Guards.

Within hours of the ceremony, the Black Duke was at sea and heading for the Welsh capital so crew could head up to Monmouth itself – the frigate cannot squeeze up the Wye into the small town – and receive the Freedom of the town from Mayor Cllr Susan White, followed by a church service.

"The rededication ceremony officially saw the ship become an integral part of the Fleet again," said Monmouth's Commanding Officer Cdr Guy Haywood.

"We're extremely honoured to have been given the Freedom of Monmouth. It's a mark of the strong relationship which exists between the town and the ship, and one I hope continues for a long time to come."

With the festivities over, business began as the frigate weighed anchor and turned for the Atlantic after a brief spell back in Devonport.

Monmouth takes over drug-busting duties from HMS Manchester which returned to the UK just before Christmas.

During her spell as head of the RN's Atlantic Patrol Task Group (North) alongside tanker RFA Wave Knight which stayed out in the Caribbean region over Christmas, the frigate will help foster links between two Plymouths – the famous Naval centre in the west country and its namesake more than 3,000 miles to the west in Tobago.

The ship will ferry a replacement bell to worshippers at the church of St Francis Bon Accord in Tobago.

Retired vicar Rev Peter Willis who lived and worked in Tobago before returning to Devon heard

'Black Duke' takes another bell to Tobago

the Tobagonians' plea and spread the word around Plymouth.

The result, thanks to the efforts of Plymouth's churchgoing community, is the donation of a bell from the old church of St Boniface in Devonport.

The building was pulled down to make way for redevelopment and a new one put up elsewhere in Devonport, but the bell from the old tower was saved and restored.

"It means a lot to us all and underlines the strong links between the two countries, especially with the Naval tradition in Devonport," said Rev Willis.

• The rare gesture is not unique; in the 1960s HMS Ursa shipped a bell to Tobago from Crownhill in Plymouth.



Slick work by student engineers

BUDDING engineers will be converging on HMS Sultan next month to see if they have the brains and team skills worthy of the Senior Service.

The Gosport training establishment is hosting the annual engineering contest for students, using a simulated Naval exercise as the backdrop.

The HMS Marlborough Challenge has been designed by RN engineers at Sultan to tap the reservoir of talent in Britain's schools and colleges.

In a fictional scenario, HMS Marlborough chases drug runners through the South China Seas.

The criminals decide to run their ship aground to escape the RN, causing a natural disaster in the process as oil spills out.

Youngsters will be set the task of building a scale model of a craft which can get to the stricken pirate ship and scoop up the oil.

The children will receive guidance and advice from RN engineers for 'Operation Clean-up', but it will be left to the youngsters to come up with ideas to solve the problems set.

The contest has been organised by the Navy and Young Engineers, an umbrella organisation which supports engineering clubs in British schools and colleges.

Forty teams - 150 students in all, aged 10-18 - will converge on Sultan from across the UK, including Portsmouth, Southampton and Scotland's west coast, for the March 19 contest as part of National Science Week.

They will explain their designs to Naval officers before putting their craft in a specially-designed water tank to see if they work.

The children will also be given a tour of Sultan, Europe's largest engineering establishment.

Chart position improves with hi-tech maps

THE days of a bridge cluttered with paper and charts are numbered after the Navy ordered £10m of hi-tech wizardry to introduce electronic charts to the Fleet.

Nearly 50 surface ships, submarines and RFA vessels will be equipped with computer navigational charts which will revolutionise the way sailors find their way around the globe.

Electronic charts have been trialed in some of the RN's most modern vessels such as frigate HMS Westminster, which has had the system for 18 months.

Now, the less-than-snappily-titled WECDIS console - Warship Electronic Chart Display and Information System - is to become a standard feature in the Fleet.

The computer chart does not mean the end of paper, however. The traditional skills will still be taught - and maintained to ensure that if the system ever fails, old school navigating can still save the day.

But the console, unveiled at the London Boat Show, is the first step towards a paperless bridge and should relieve some of the burden of seafaring on a bridge team.

The system can provide automatic alarms and notification and detailed information about specific areas on a chart - a far cry from the official paper charts, first introduced in 1795.

Navigation students will become acquainted with WECDIS first; the consoles are being installed at the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood and will be ready this spring. The first ship to receive the system will go to sea mid-year.

Rear Admiral Peter Davies, Flag Officer Training and Recruiting,



● A graphic of the computer chart console

said paper charts had served the RN admirably since the late 18th century, but it was important to move "into the modern world".

He added: "This will improve navigational accuracy and ultimately improve safety."

"But it's more than just an electronic chart - it's the ability to link with other parts of a ship's command system which takes it to the next level. And it will reduce the load on the bridgekeeping team."

The admiral continued: "There

will be some people with concerns about using computers."

"It's the end of an era, but the ships who have been trialing the consoles don't want to give them back. I'm convinced that once fitted, sailors will like WECDIS."

For smaller and cramped vessels, especially submarines, there should be the additional benefit of the chart consoles taking up far less space.

"If you think of submarines, space is limited and critical. Now they are only going to need a few charts," the admiral added.

Havant-based defence firm Lockheed Martin will oversee the project - £10m to initially fit the console to 48 major RN and RFA vessels, followed by in-service support worth £19m - alongside partner firms Kelvin Hughes, Babcock and Offshore Systems.

All 48 vessels should be kitted out by the end of 2006. Two consoles will be fitted to each vessel selected, with a remote station in the charthouse in line with international safety regulations.



● A mock-up of a WECDIS terminal on the bridge of Type 42 destroyer HMS Southampton, one of the ships which will receive the system

Picture: Lockheed Martin



● ...and the old way of doing things. Lt Angus Essenhigh, son of the former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Nigel, plots a course during his spell as navigating officer of the USS Winston S Churchill

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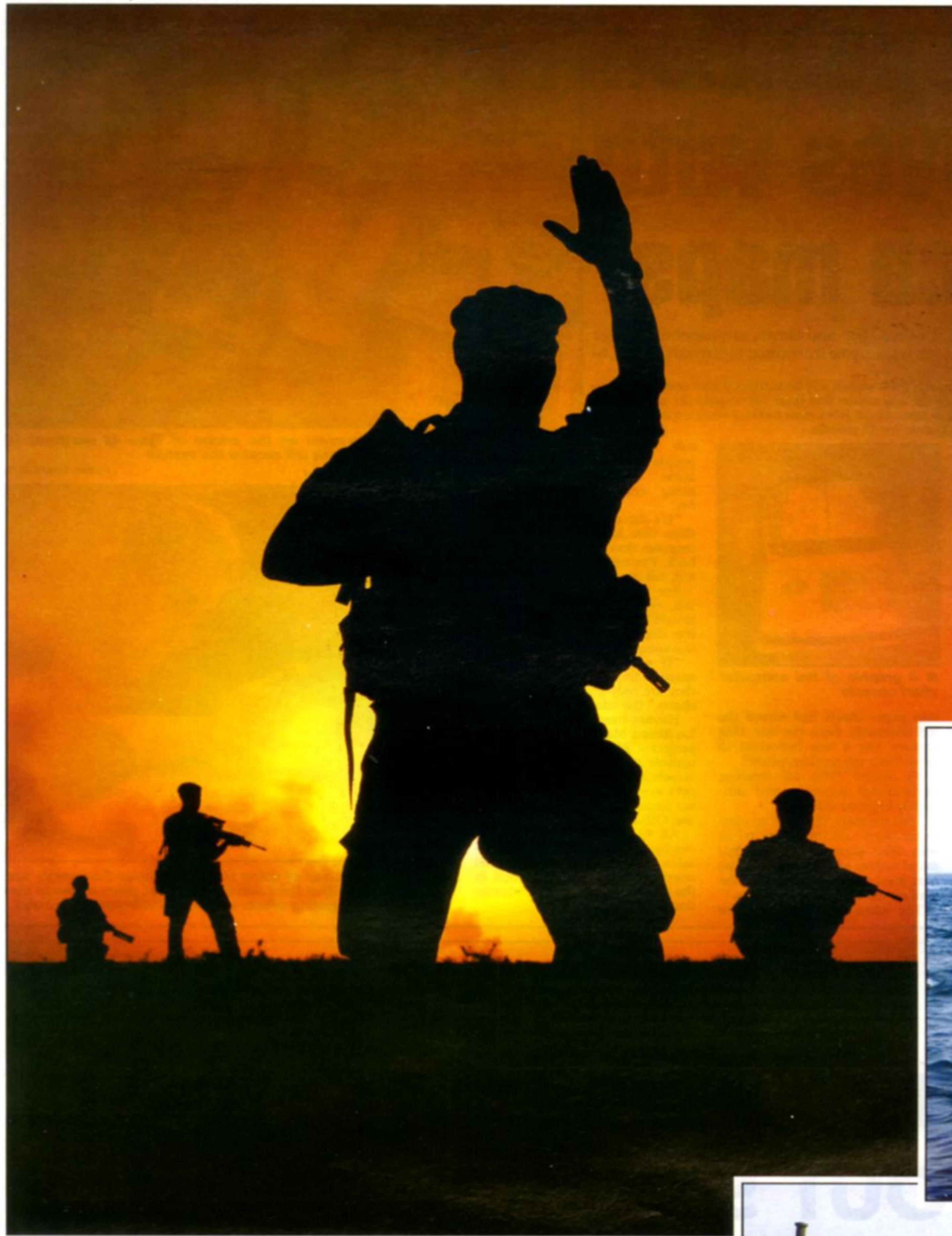


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the UK and overseas in just some of these areas, with many more due to become available. Salaries start from £16,281 rising to £35,004 depending on the level of the post, your experience and expertise. To find out more visit www.jobs.mod.uk or write to Military Support Function (Recruitment), PO Box 3424, Bath BA1 5ZP.

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● 'Red or dead' is the title of PO(PHOT) Tam McDonald's dramatic silhouette of men of Comms Troop, 3 Commando Brigade, as they returned from a patrol in Iraq during Operation Telic, with the setting sun and a burning oil well providing a stunning backdrop. Tam won the title Calumet Royal Navy Photographer of the Year

● Another shot by PO(PHOT) Tam McDonald (right), entitled 'Ready, Aim, Fire'. This image shows Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade adjusting their General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMGs) on the Eudra ranges near Kuwait as the Allied forces prepared for action in Iraq



● (Left) Type 23 frigate HMS Marlborough ploughs through heavy seas in the Arafura Sea while on where she was due to take part in the multinational Exercise Flying Fish. This photograph from the was taken by LA(PHOT) Sean Clee

Brigade in the

THE SPOILS of victory went to the Navy's amphibious infantry when the prizes were announced for this year's Peregrine Trophy.

Two of the top awards at the Royal Navy's photographic competition went to 3 Commando Brigade RM - the Peregrine Trophy Portfolio and the Calumet RN Photographer of the Year, picked up by PO(PHOT) Tam McDonald.

Operations in Iraq early in 2003 were the subject of intense media scrutiny, and Navy photos took their fair share of striking images as forces geared up for conflict, engaged the enemy, and started

to rebuild the shattered aftermath.

But there were plenty covered between the 290 entries.

The judges of this year's Catherine Benson of the agency, Eric Jenkins, head of Board at the British Institute of Photographers, and Paul De College, who once again impressed they were by the entries.

The annual competition around 40 years ago to give

photographers a wider audience. The Photographic Branch was formed just after World War I to record and analyse the performance of guns and other weapons systems.

From that original task



Picture

country in the
of other subjects
ries, from Royal
sporting fixtures.

competition were
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commented on how
the quality of the

was established
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allow the Navy to
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tems.

ing grew a remit

which covers everything from intelligence
work to public relations, now using the latest
digital technology in terms of still and video
work.

The specialisation is also responsible for
the supply of personnel to meet an increasing
operational dependence on intelligence
image analysis, which requires an intensive
training course at Chicksands in Bedford-
shire, equipping successful candidates with the
skills to analyse images from land and sea.

Peregrine winners will attend a prizegiving
ceremony later this month on board aircraft
carrier HMS Ark Royal.

Results: Peregrine Trophy Portfolio winner: 1 – 3 Cdo Bde RM; Highly
Commended – RNAS Culdrose

Calumet RN Photographer of the Year: 1 –

PO(PHOT) Tam McDonald (3 Cdo RM); HC –

PO(PHOT) Steve Russell-Stevenson

(JARIC); LA(PHOT) Gaz Armes (40 Cdo RM)

**Agusta Westland
Maritime Air Prize:** 1 –

PO(PHOT) Jim Gibson

(DCC(N)); 2 – LA(PHOT)

Kevin Russell (FRPU(E));

HC – LA(PHOT) Kevin

Russell

● (Above right) LA(PHOT) Sean Clee caught a member of the
ship's company of HMS Marlborough getting into sumo mode
during the frigate's visit to Singapore

● (Left) HMS Ocean won the Commandant General RM's
Prize; here a school of dolphins is captured on camera close
to the helicopter carrier by LA(PHOT) Angie Pearce

● (Right) LA(PHOT) Sean Clee's study of the men of Delta Co,
40 Cdo RM waiting to go ashore in Iraq from HMS Ark Royal
in the Gulf captures the tension in the darkened hangar

● (Below) British Royal Marines and their American
counterparts are airlifted by US Sea Knight helicopters from Umm
Qasr to positions near Basra in the early stages of the conflict
in Iraq. This image, by award-winner PO(PHOT) Tam
McDonald, is entitled 'Blowing Up a Storm'

CMS Ltd Public Relations picture: 1 –
LA(PHOT) Gaz Armes; HC – PO(PHOT)
Steve Russell-Stevenson

**Kodak Navy Award for Sports
Photography:** 1 – LA(PHOT) Wheeley
A'Barrow (FRPU(E)); HC – LA(PHOT) Daz
Casey (CTCRM)

CGRM Prize: 1 – HMS Ocean; HC – 3 Cdo
Bde RM

Digital Imaging Award: 1 – ALA(PHOT)

Chris Wenham (RNNS Yeovilton); HC –

LA(PHOT) Gaz Armes

The Maritime Books Trophy: 1 –

LA(PHOT) Sean Clee (FRPU(E)); HC –

LA(PHOT) Kev Russell

Hasselblad Award: 1 – PO(PHOT) Gary

Davies (2SL); HC – LA(PHOT) Paul

Brookes (FRPU(E))

Navy News Award: 1 – LA(PHOT) Wheeley
A'Barrow

RN Student Award: 1 – ALA(PHOT) Sean

Preston

Open Category: 1 – PO(PHOT) Jim

Gibson; HC – PO(PHOT) Jim Gibson

Amateur Category: 1 – Cpl W.T. Faragher

(40 Cdo RM); 2 – CPOSA S. Prior (HMS

Nelson); 3 – Cpl W.T. Faragher; HC – Cdr

Sheehan (HMS Heron – COLHF)



passage to Singapore,
the ship's Lynx helicopter



At Your Leisure

Tugg tells all

LEGENDARY *Navy News* cartoonist Tugg Wilson will give away some secrets of his art with a talk in Portsmouth this month.

The Royal Naval Museum is hosting a day of talks, lectures and demonstrations on art and the Senior Service, from serious works to humour from the 18th century to the present day.

Tugg, whose Jack cartoon is a mainstay of *Navy News*, will bring along his electronic drawing pad, as RN archivist Matthew Sheldon recalls some of the 18th century sketchers such as Gillray and Rowlandson who brought the bygone Navy to life.

Other speakers at the February 28 event include Geoff Hunt who painted the covers of Patrick O'Brian's novels and James Taylor, the museum's fine art consultant.

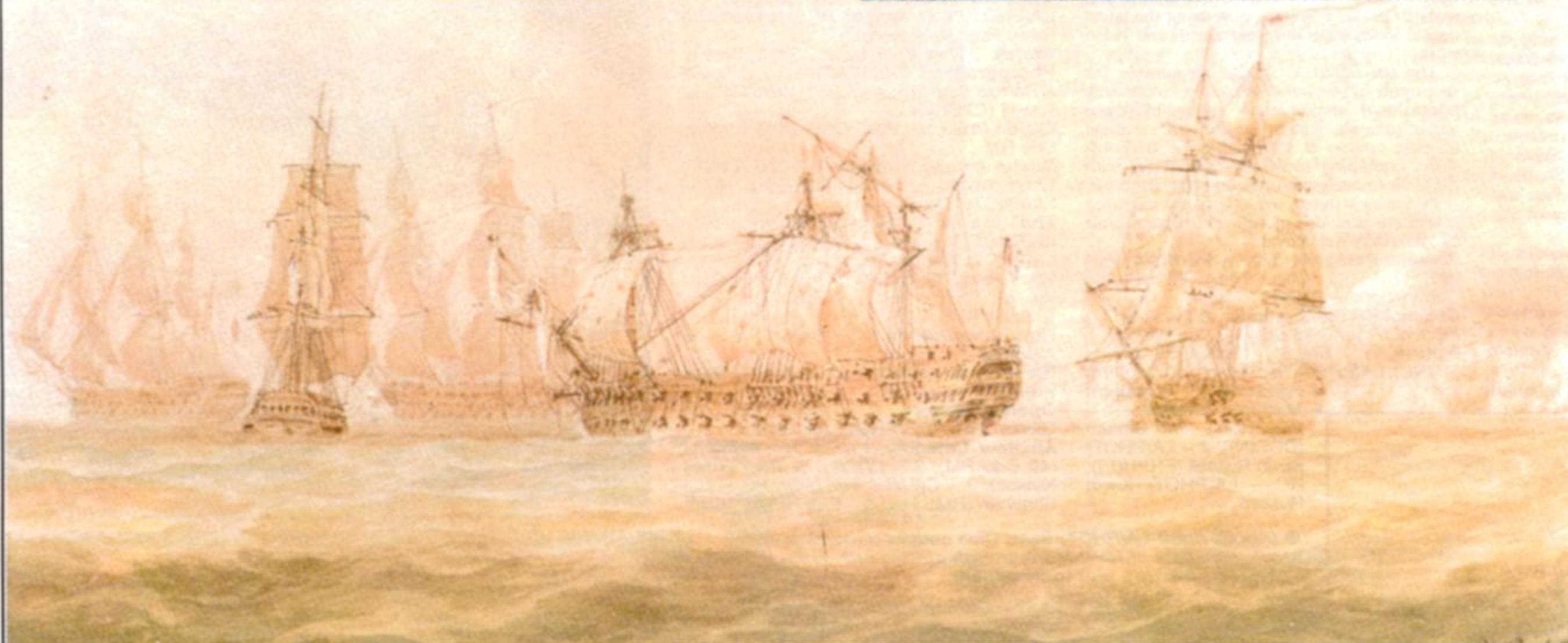
Details on the event in Portsmouth's historic dockyard on 023 9272 7583 or trevor.carpenter@royalnavalmuseum.org

Cover art

THE DRAWING *The Capture of the Ca Ira by the Agamemnon March 1795* by Nicholas Pocock (1740-1821) is included in the latest cover issued by the RN Philatelic Society celebrating the ships and vessels in which Nelson served – Agamemnon was his favourite.

Also released is a cover marking the centenary of the RN Football Association (see page 42).

Both come with detailed booklets packed with background information and a selection of picture cards. For details write to the RNPO, 19 College Road, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, Hants.



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Classic Shep caught on CD

TO MARK the first 25 years of his career as 'The Laughing Sailor', singer/songwriter Shep Woolley has put some of the best of his earlier recordings on CD.

Chips off the Old Bloke is a two-CD compilation of tracks from the albums *Pipe Down*, *Songs for Oars & Scrubbers* and *Goodbye Sailor & Reunion*, available from Ardpea Productions, 7 Livingstone Road, Southsea, Hants PO5 1RS at £20 plus £4pp.

Overboard (£10 plus £4 pp) is a selection from three cassettes released in the 1980s, *On the Button*, *Whaley Tales* and *Delivering the Goods*.

You can have all three for £30 postage paid. Cheques made out to S. Woolley.

Shep joined the RN in 1960 and left in 1975. No stranger to showbusiness, he had already released two LPs and was in great demand in folk clubs and Service messes at home and abroad, where his work was familiar through the British Forces Broadcasting Service.

Today he is as busy as ever, a typical week recently finding him after dinner speaking in Dubai on Monday, singing in Bahrain on Wednesday and performing in a village hall in Dorset on Saturday.





Rebuilding the Navy – now it can be told

FIRST Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West has said that Britain today has the second most potent Fleet in the world, with new ships and others on the way providing "a step change in capability".

In fact, as D. K. Brown points out in **Rebuilding the Royal Navy – Warship Design Since 1945** (Chatham £35), at the dawn of a new century the Royal Navy is far better equipped for its world role than it was at the end of World War II.

Although the Fleet was enormous in 1945, much of it was old and worn-out. Britain also faced economic austerity and a reduced global tasking.

At the same time new threats and novel technologies rendered even the newer ships obsolescent.

How British designers responded to these unprecedented challenges is one of the central themes of this book.

Based on both declassified documentation and personal experience, it is the fourth and final volume in the author's authoritative series on Royal Navy warship design.

In this one, aided by George Moore's in-depth archival research on the substantial body of material declassified in recent years, he tackles the period in which he himself worked as a Naval Constructor.

He looks at some of the ambitious ideas for replacement or conversion of the bigger ships, most of which were stifled for lack of funds, but concentrates on new construction, with chapters on all the major categories from aircraft

carriers, through destroyers and frigates, to submarines, mine-sweepers and small craft.

Each contains new information on unbuilt designs, identifies many innovations and analyses the impact of the Falklands War.

Of post-war ship designs, the author singles out for special praise the Leander class frigates ("so good that it was difficult to design a better ship at a comparable price").

The Type 22 was the true Leander replacement and a success.

British submarines are the quietest – HMS Valiant started from scratch and hence is his personal choice for "all-time greatness" but Swiftsure and Trafalgar still improved on that good start.

He concludes that today the quality and flexibility of the Fleet is being demonstrated in no uncertain terms. The future appears bright – though the time taken to get new designs into service remains a matter for concern.

Carriers exemplify the saying 'Big is Beautiful'. Contractors for the new carriers under development have found that increasing the size actually reduces the cost, due to easier installation and maintenance. Many people, both in the Admiralty and in industry had been saying this for years but no one listened. The Invincibles were another success."

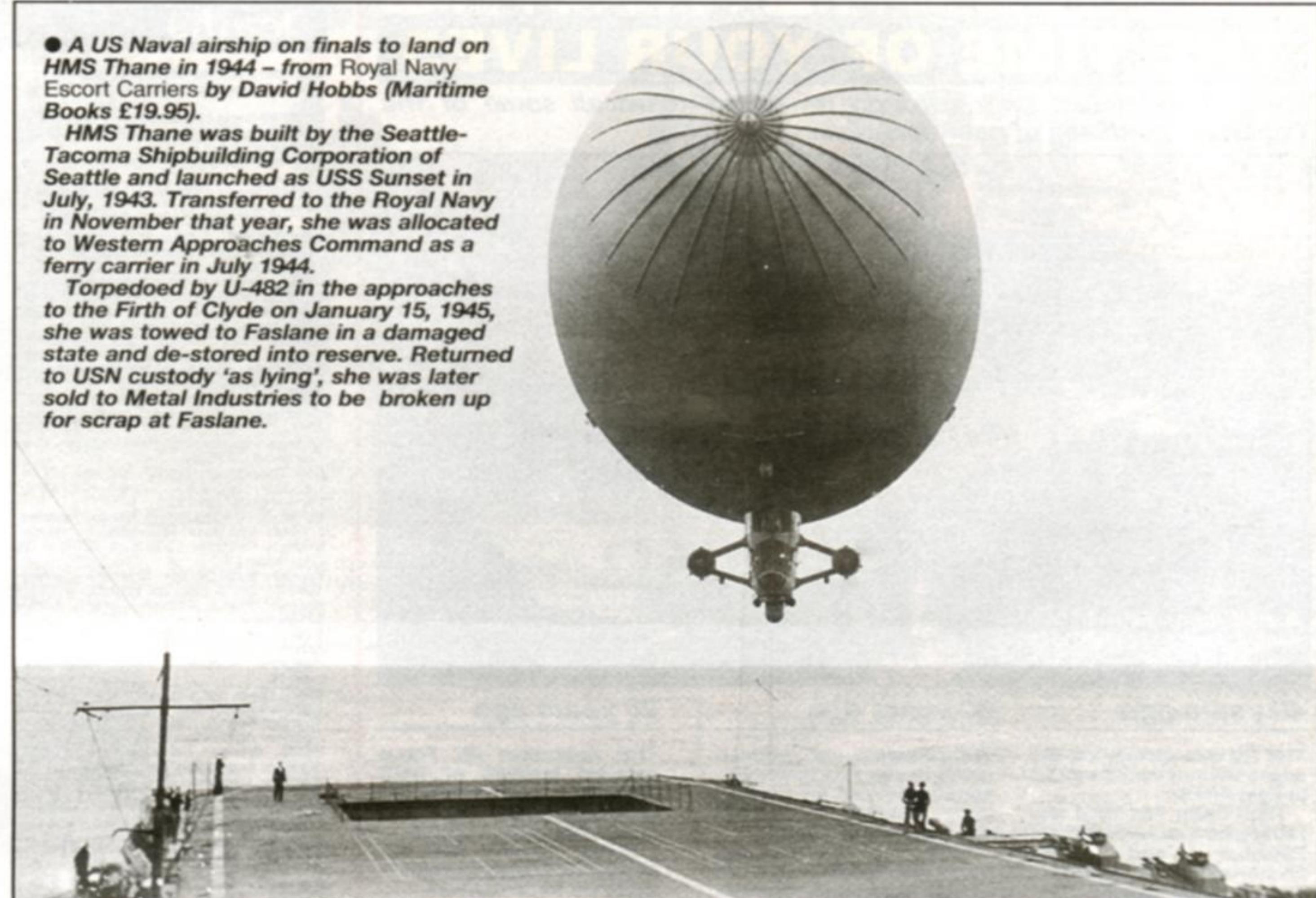
● **HMS Turbulent**, as she appears in the annual guide to British Warships & Auxiliaries published by Maritime Books at £6.95. In his introduction, compiler Steve Bush speculates that over 30 Tomahawk land attack missiles were fired against Saddam Hussein's regime by Turbulent and her sister nuclear-powered submarine HMS Splendid



● A US Naval airship on trials to land on HMS Thane in 1944 – from Royal Navy Escort Carriers by David Hobbs (Maritime Books £19.95).

HMS Thane was built by the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation of Seattle and launched as USS Sunset in July, 1943. Transferred to the Royal Navy in November that year, she was allocated to Western Approaches Command as a ferry carrier in July 1944.

Torpedoed by U-482 in the approaches to the Firth of Clyde on January 15, 1945, she was towed to Faslane in a damaged state and de-stored into reserve. Returned to USN custody 'as lying', she was later sold to Metal Industries to be broken up for scrap at Faslane.



How Jutland won the war

AS A PIECE of story-telling, Robert K. Massie's **Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany and the Winning of the Great War at Sea** (Jonathan Cape £25) is first rate – though most of it has been told before.

Descriptions of the principal naval battles – the main ones were Heligoland Bight (1914), Dogger Bank (1915) and Jutland (1916) – are excellent, as are the portraits of the men who directed them (interesting that Tirpitz, the creator of the German Navy, sent his daughters to Cheltenham Ladies College – but then so many British young people studied at Germany's chief seats of learning, such as Heidelberg, in the years leading up to World War I).

Germany's chief problem lay in the fact that Britain's Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow blocked any attempt by the High Seas Fleet ships to break into the Atlantic.

It would take them 30 hours to steam out of their base in Kiel before rounding Scotland – giving plenty of notice to the Grand Fleet to come out and intercept them.

And they always did, thanks in no small part to the fact that they got hold of the German codes right at the beginning of the war.

So even as the High Seas Fleet sailed in May 1916 the Royal Navy was on the way to meet it.

The Battle of Jutland is still held by many Germans as a German victory. Certainly they sank more ships and killed more seamen – but there can be little doubt that strategically it was a shattering defeat for them.

Never again would the High Seas Fleet venture out in strength to pose any significant threat to British commerce and the squadrons that protected it – while the British blockade starved Germany into submission.

Richard Hough, in his own **The Great War at Sea** (Oxford University Press 1983) actually argued that the Royal Navy not only beat the Kriegsmarine with

out resort to a second Trafalgar, but that its unrelenting pressure was the prime factor which led to the defeat on land of the Central Powers by the end of 1918.

It was famously said of the Grand Fleet's commander John

Jellicoe that he was "the only man who could have lost the war in an afternoon". He may or may not have lost his battle – but that battle won the war for him.

Jellicoe's reward after the war was to be made a viscount, "a title



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● Admiral John Jellicoe

usually reserved for a moderately efficient Cabinet Minister on retirement," said his friend Admiral Bacon. Beatty, his flamboyant 2IC at Jutland who later held the post of First Sea Lord for eight years, got an earldom.

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NoticeBoard

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the February headlines of past decades...



• HMS Invincible, her crew in whites, is helped into Sydney Harbour by tugs

40 years ago

THE RN was quickly on the scene when unrest flared up in East Africa.

HMS Owen and Rhyd and RFA Hebe were sent to Zanzibar and HMS Cambrian and Centaur arrived off Tanganyika.

Commandos from Centaur stormed barracks held by rebels in Dar-es-Salaam then mounted guard patrols in the city to restore stability. In Zanzibar Britons, mostly women and children, were ferried to Mombasa.

30 years ago

THE prospect of women going to sea was under discussion as part of a study into broadening career opportunities for wrens.

Public and Naval opinion was against using women in combat roles, but senior officers felt it was time to look at women's role in the RN – especially at a time when recruitment was tough.

"Mixed manning could be an eventual possibility," NN mused, two decades before it became reality.

20 years ago

THE Australian Air Force ensured families of HMS Invincible's crew would not miss loved ones when the carrier went Down Under.

Ninety wives flew to Sydney to meet husbands when the flattop arrived.

But then she had to leave quickly for Singapore. The 90 crew were left behind with their wives to enjoy a break, then flown by the RAAF to Perth to be picked up by Sea Kings and ferried back to 'Vince'.

Submissions for next month's Noticeboard must be received before February 16



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Deaths

Mme Christian Stansfield RM, January 7. Mme Anthony Clarke RM, 42 Cdo, January 17. PO(TSM) Daryl Lambert, FOST, January 3. W(Sea)1 Louise Beech RNR, HMS King Alfred, December 27. WO(WEM) John Porter, Area Security Team East, January 13. PO(MA) Kevin Crook, HMS Splendid, January 12.

Capt Henry St John Fancourt, Served 1913-late 1940s. Midshipman in HMS Princess Royal at Jutland. CO 822 NAS, CO HMS Sparrowhawk during Bismarck chase, CO HMS Broke and Malcolm in Torch landings 1942, CO HMS Argus and Unicorn 1943. January 8, aged 103.

William 'Bill' Sharp, CPO(Coxswain), Served 1938-47. Service included: Impregnable, Carlisle, Helford, Atlantic convoys, Mediterranean (Matapan, Sirta; mentioned in dispatches for Malta and Crete), Simonstown and Far East. January 7, aged 81.

Charles McHardie, HMS Bigbury Bay Association, January.

Ray Thompson, Served post-war RN in Ceylon, Singapore, and HMS Kent, December 24, aged 74.

Lt Edwin Howard RNVR, Service included: Forward LST Base Rosneath, Normandy landings. Collected LSTs from USA for D-Day, January 7.

Norman 'Mick' Gordon, Chief ERA, Served 1943-67. Ships included: Fisgard, St Kitts, Ausiona, Anson, Triumph (Korea and 65-67), Neptune, Superb, Sturdy, Aurora, Explorer, USS Skipjack, Collingwood, Sultan, Saker, Dolphin, Maidstone, Pembroke, Hartland Point. December 23, aged 76.

Leslie Davis, Ships included: Gozo Rinaldo, Algerines Association, November 4.

Thomas Barrett, Ships included: Pincher, Algerines Association, December 8.

Leslie Brisley, Ships included: Vestal, Algerines Association, December 14.

Geoffrey Cannon, Ships included: Jaseur, December 28.

Eddy Dove, LS, Ships included: Hood, Cossack (Altmark incident). Served with US Rangers at Sword and Juno beaches, D-Day. Cossack Association, Aged 83.

Lt Cdr Warren Dennis, Ships included: MS Dolphin, Perseus, H28, Devonshire, Rodney, Revenge, Bulldog, Cossack, CO Mendi, naval attaché to Chiang Kai-Shek, Cossack Association.

Goff White, CPO(SCC), 1st Lt of TS Hermes (Tiverton) 1991-present. Organised affiliation with P&O Nedlloyd Singapore Bay and trips to Royal Tournament.

Bill Watson, Ships included: HMS Clyde 1940-45.

Leslie Dutton, CPO, Served 1936-46. Ships included: Fisgard, Anson, Burnham and their associations. September 22, aged 82.

John Taylor, Air gunner, later pilot FAA, Served 1939-45, including Atlantic and Mediterranean. Later publisher including editor of Tailor and Cutter. December 19, aged 82.

A E 'Eddie' Edbrook, Lt(Electrical), Ships included: Vanguard, Ocean, Verney Bay, Daring, Daring Association 52-54. November, aged 78.

Frederick Carter, Artificer instructor, Served 1942-46. Service included: Chatham dockyard, HMS Excalibur, Triumph, Wizard, Superb, Ark Royal. Aged 77.

Reginald Addison, Ships included: Belfast, Belfast Association, December 29.

Lt D F J Dore, Ships included: Caledonia, Collingwood, Newcastle, Albion, Diamond, Victorious, FMG Singapore 1971-74. December 24.

Richard Key, Torpedo operator, Service included: Ganges, Birmingham, Bacchante, Normandy landings. Aged 82.

Percy Coward, Anti-air gunner, Ships included: Raleigh, Drake, Eastern Isles, Rodney, Hart, Rodney Association, Aged 82.

Steph Potts (nee Laws), Served 1977-85. Service included: Dauntless, Yeovil, Raleigh, Culdrose, Nelson, Dolphin. December 20, aged 43.

Gaston Sanz, LOG (CPO), Served in Free French submarines. London branch, Submariners' Association, Aged 82.

Hans Ormestad, PO, Served in Ula (Norwegian), Scotland, NE branch, Submariners' Association, Aged 81.

Tom Avann, Stoker, 1st class. Boats included: Sturdy, Sirdar, Mersey branch, Submariners' Association.

Kenneth Morgan, AB, Ships included: HMS Bressenden, Bressenden Association, Aged 79.

Capt Sir Thomas Barlow, October 12.

Bill Linford, AB, Served 1937-45. Ships included: Nelson, Vener, Bridport, Anthony, Victory, Excellent, December 21, aged 84.

R Lake, Std, RN Patrol Service, Service included: Europa, Yarler, Senator-du-Hamel, Newfoundland, Aged 83.

Tony Cooper, CCY, Ships included: St Vincent, Ganges, Ladybird, Zodiac, FO Portsmouth, Phoenix Park, Coquet, Mercury, Marrowman, Dolphin, Aisne, Terror, Combray, Phoebe, Drid, Wessex.

Michael 'Aubrey' Brabon, CRS, Ships included: Ganges, Saintes, Loch Fyne, Naiaid, Mercury, Kranji, Ganges.

Jan Gray, Chief Wren(Ck), Served 1952-74. Ships included: Drake, Excellent, Dauntless, St Budeaux, Furze House, Deal, Wrens Association, Aged 70.

Cdr E I Pidditch, Last CO HMS Atherton 1944-45.

Harold White, Lt, RNVR, Service included: Oberon, Sea Lion, USS Herring, P556, Vivid, Virtue, Unswerving, Supreme, London branch, Submariners' Association.

Tim Dilke, S/Lt, Service included: HMS Cheviot, 1945-December.

Judith Hayward (nee Hoare), Served 1975-78. Ships included: Dauntless, Mercury, President, Dolphin, Seahawk, November 10.

George Brazier, WO, Served 1947-75. Service included: Theseus, Perseus, Ark Royal, Victorious, Eagle, RNAS Culdrose, RNAS Fulmar, December 16, aged 74.

Jack Marchant, Signalman, Served HMS Unicorn 1943-47. Former chairman Unicorn Association, November 17, aged 77.

Gordan Goss, Service included: HMS Opportune, Opportune Association, December 14.

Dave Reynolds, WO(AEA), Served 1952-92. Ships included: Triumph, Victorious, Hermes, Ark Royal, Long-time chairman, Helston Association, November 3, aged 69.

V G 'Taff' Bowen, PO(Tel), Service included: Ulster, Ladybird, Ladybird (Sasebo Japan 1950-53) Association, December 22.

N Lupton, Service included: Opportune, Opportune Association, September.

Mel 'Spanners' Jones, Chief ERA, Served 1944-65. Ships included: Sentinel, Tireless, Tabard, Augira, Dolphin, August 17.

Dick Dunsmuir, AB, Served HMS Cheviot 1948-19, October 19.

Jim Bennett, CPO(Tel), Served HMS Cheviot 1958, November 30.

James Armstrong, Ships included: Squirrel, Algerines Association, September 7.

Ian Male, Ships included: Waterwitch, Algerines Association, October 15.

Douglas Bradbrook, Ships included: Lioness, Algerines Association, November 21.

Henry Scott, Ships included: Acute, Algerines Association, November 29.

Wesley 'Bob' Green, Ships included: HMS Cockatrice, December 1.

Jack Alvey, Maj, RM, Service included: HMS Belfast, Belfast Association, December 5.

George Treadwell, CPO, Served from 1927. Ships included: Benbow, Emperor of India, Nelson, Warspite, Queen Elizabeth, Suffolks, Daring, Tyrant, Blanche, Emerald, Perseus. Loaned to Royal Malaysian Navy 1956. Organiser of HMS Nelson (battleship) reunions, January 17, aged 93.

Joe Jordan, Service included: Ladybird, Ladybird Association, January 17.

Peter Darby, Stoker, Ships included: Indefatigable, December 19, aged 87.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Frederick 'Dick' Reed, Soham and District, Ships included: Loyal, January 2, aged 85.

Marie Judge, Battersea, Associate member for 40 years, December 26, aged 84.

Arthur Speed, Uxbridge, AB, Served 1944-46. Service included: landing craft, Standard bearer, Normandy Veterans' Association, Landing Craft Association.

Frederick Halsey, Thurrock Branch, AB, Served 1941-46. Ships included: Quentin, Hannibal, Verity, Thruster, Victory, December 24, aged 80.

Sylvia Stole, Bourne, Served 1943-46, December 30, aged 81.

Ken Williams, Bishop's Stortford, Service included: LST280, minesweeping in the Far East, Secretary-treasurer, LST and Landing Craft Association, December 14, aged 77.

Bill Kingsland, Enfield, Stoker, Served 1952-59. Ships included: Obdurate, Centaur, Neptune, Shefford, December 14, aged 68.

George Cowan, Associate member, North Manchester, Served RAF 1939-46, December 19.

Bob Russell, Margate, AB AA3, Ships included: Hornet, Canopus, MTBs 65, 63, 73, 375, December 31.

Fred Tibble, Dagenham, Gunner, President for 16 years. Also former local councillor and mayor, December 13, aged 82.

John Graham, Whitehaven, Ships included: Alliance, Barrow branch, Submariners' Association, November 19, aged 73.

Idris Lewis, Solva and St David's, AB(Torpedoman), Ships included: Andromeda, Delphi, Octavia, Founder member, Aged 78.

Ron Martin, Bexhill-on-Sea, formerly Eastbourne, Served 1944-47, Ships included: Daedalus, Raven, Seruwa, Godwit, Goldcrest, December 20, aged 77.

A

Non-squadded billets abound

THERE has been a change at the helm of D2 Drafting Section as Cdr Bob Hore replaced Cdr Steve Foster in September last year.

We also saw the arrival of Lt Cdr Peter Pittard, who has responsibility for WE drafting, relieving Lt Cdr Les Maddock – a familiar name to several generations of 'Greenies'.

With MEMs now firmly bedded into their Squads, work is well advanced in seeing the move of Leading Hands into their Squads from April 1 – of which more below.

Regular Drafting and Manning Roadshows occur in your area, so make sure you attend to hear all that is happening.

MEA Drafting

The transition to the SQless MEA has passed almost unnoticed following 18 months of drafting by the MEBD principles of

rate/adqual, rather than rate/SQ.

At the same time, the geographic aspiration/billet imbalance at CPO level has reduced as a result of changes to employers' Schemes of Complement requirements and natural wastage from the plot.

Whilst this will be good news for many, guaranteeing individual preferences remains problematic.

Although every effort is made to meet individuals' aspirations within the constraints of Service requirements, Drafty has to rely on information supplied on DPFs and C240s.

It is essential that these are up-to-date, accurate and honest, particularly with respect to recommendations for instructional duties and small ships, as well as LFS, where there is high demand for very few billets.

Despite this general demand for LFS, Drafty is always keen to hear from any budding German speakers who fancy an exchange job in

Germany!

MEM Drafting

Since the roll out of TMSS for the ME Able Rates, there still remains a significant number of non-squadded billets.

These are advertised on the monthly NMA GOSPORT signal and include both sea and shore billets.

From last month there were 73 posts ashore and 33 at sea. The shore billets are predominantly in Plymouth and Portsmouth, with a handful in Scotland.

The anticipated duration in a shore billet for a MEM is currently 18 months.

CND retains responsibility for moving personnel as a ship prepares for refit and for the build up on completion; these billets are also advertised on the monthly signal.

All volunteers are processed by the local WMO before the nomi-



'We don't seem to have that on our list!'

nees are passed by signal to the appropriate drafting desk within CND.

LMEMs will become "squadded" in April this year.

ERDs will be amended for those at sea and drafted into the squads to reflect 48 months from their original "sea date."

As with the ABs, there are a number of non-squadded billets both at sea and ashore that will remain.

There will be approximately 120 shore billets, once again mainly in Plymouth and Portsmouth, but there will also be 35 sea billets, including the P2000s and Gibraltar PBS.

The anticipated duration in a shore billet for a LMEM is currently 12 months.

WE Drafting

Manpower shortage across all specialisations in the trained strength of General Service WE

Artificers has resulted in opportunities for WE Mechanic Senior Rates to dabble in more interesting and challenging employment.

Now firmly back in the WE drafting fold, WEMs can be employed in a variety of billets including External Comms, SCOT, 4.5 Gun, Seadart/909, Air Weapons, Command Systems and GWS 25.

Due to the continued shortages of LOMs, LWEMs will be used in some billets to ease the gapping but they will not be squadded due to their low numbers.

Employment of WE Artificers is specialised and they continue to be personally drafted by D2WE who currently micro-manages the plot.

Despite losing their SQs earlier this year, WEA drafting is still done by a man's previous experience and stream, although, if you want to change direction, for example would rather maintain a 996 Radar or ADAWS than a 4.5in

gun then let Drafty know!

All specialisations are on, or approaching, Minimum Time Ashore (not forgetting that MTA ceases to exist from April 1 this year) except CC/WO2 as numbers have been selected to meet the requirement.

D2WE conducts regular briefing lectures with the new Apprentice and WEA Candidate courses as they leave HMS Collingwood to go to their first sea jobs.

All are reminded that unless your personal details and preferences are up to date in NMMIS then Drafty's crystal ball cannot function.

Similarly, the importance of a timely RED X DPF at about four to five months before your ERD is essential if you want that particular shore job.

Remember – you don't appear on the Shore Bill unless your Leave and AVDATE has been inputted to NMMIS.

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DRAFTING OFFICER	D2WEA	LT CDR P. PITTRAD	2524
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CPOMEA DRAFTING DESK	AD2MEA2	POWTR S. MARCHANT	2576

Personal plans are backbone of system

LAST year turned out to be a challenging period for the Waterfront Manning Office (WMO) teams, as it was for anyone involved in management of the Squad system.

The Portsmouth office, in line with their colleagues around the country, have worked closely with individuals to keep pace with the changes, and the Pompey operation has undergone some expansion into the bargain.

The office now includes an SPO manager, a POMA administration assistant and will soon include a CPO to run the new Military Aid to the Civil Community (MACC) office in Lochinvar Block in preparation for Leading Hands in April.

In Faslane, the WMO is divided into three sections: V-boats, S-boats and the 3rd Mine Countermeasures Squadron (MCM3), which are manned by one Senior Rate and one Junior Rate.

There is also a Medical Cell manned by 1 POMA.

It is anticipated however, an uplift in personnel will materialise in line with the introduction of the Leading Hands into the Squad System.

The WMO here is about to conduct an office move from Belmore House to the Administration Building within HMS Neptune.

This will place the WMO in the same building as the RCDA,

MACCO and the Transit Divisional Officers.

The Coxswains onboard now have the additional tasks of formulating the Planning Tool and ensuring Departmental Co-ordinators furnish their squads with Personal Plans.

The recent changes, allowing people to book courses electronically, have been put in place, and work continues on the upgrading process to provide more functionality.

If anyone has encountered any difficulties in this area they should inform the PAS help desk along with the WMO administration assistant.

Personal plans are the backbone of squad management.

The WMO will ensure that individuals landed by units deploying, achieve their Harmony, or attend courses in accordance with their personal plan.

It is necessary though for those individuals or ships to liaise with the WMO and employers to validate their Temporary Employment Letters which allow completion of the RORRS 3.

This personal plan is of equal importance for those on board, and WMO teams will monitor their production along with separated service after an uplift in IT.

Augmentation for events should be planned as far ahead as possi-

ble, and the recently distributed bill for 2004 should be with Executive Warrant Officers (EWOS).

Planning ahead is vital, and all Flotilla ships succeeded in meeting all their requirements in 2003, including Operation Telic in Iraq.

Prompt responses to requests ensure that personal plans can be factored in around the Service need.

Close co-operation with FLEET N1 and PERS division has meant a more streamlined approach to manpower issues as they occur, and many of these are dealt with at the local level with direct links and face-to-face meetings resulting in a more rapid response time.

The Mine Countermeasures Vessel (MCMV) Flotilla will be running the second of their sea days between March 8-12 to provide greater awareness of service in these vessels, which provide an ideal broadening opportunity for ratings of all branches.

This refers in particular to potential clearance diver candidates.

EWOS should contact squadron Coxswains direct with names of personnel who wish to attend.

A final plea from the WMOs – they are one-stop shops as regards manpower issues, and whether landed for harmony or just seeking some advice, drop in and staff will endeavour to assist and will always offer clear guidance and advice.



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Royal Naval Association



Pearl Harbour service is staged

THE ANNUAL Pearl Harbour parade and Service of Remembrance held by Southend branch attracted one of the largest attendances of recent times.

Some 23 standards from branches throughout No 5 Area and London were paraded with a Colour Guard of US Marines.

Those present included Capt Stephen Matts, Commander US Naval Activities UK, Capt Richard Jones, Royal Australian Navy and Defence Attaché, the Mayor, Cllr Charles Latham, Sir Teddy Taylor MP and David Amess MP and other local dignitaries, including members of the US Navy, the US Marine Corps and the US Air Force.

Pair rewarded

AT AN ENJOYABLE branch dinner dance, attended by 125 members of Gravesend branch and guests, life membership was awarded to S/Ms Bill Finney and Bob Ross for loyal service to the branch.

Guest of honour at the dinner was Rear Admiral John Bell, Deputy President of the Association.

Maltese friends

ON A fortnight's holiday in Malta, ten members of Clacton-on-Sea branch met up with old friends.

A poppy wreath was placed on behalf of the branch at the RMA War Memorial by S/M Jan King, the branch secretary.



• S/M Bob Kettlewell (left) finally receives his green beret from Wetherby branch president S/M Sid Hall

Bob gets his green beret 64 years late

WELCOMING S/M Bob Kettlewell, ex-Royal Marines, to Wetherby branch, the President, S/M Sid Hall, presented him with a green beret – having heard that S/M Bob never had one, despite distinguished service during the Second World War which won him a Distinguished Service Medal and Bar as well as other decorations.

He joined the Royal Marines in February 1939 at Deal, when he was aged 17, and after sea and gunnery training at Chatham was soon



• Cyprus branch chairman Lt Cdr Nobby Hall (right) greets new president Sir Edward du Cann

Politician becomes president

MEMBERS of the Cyprus branch are pleased that the Rt Hon Sir Edward du Cann, former MP and member of the Conservative Party, has agreed to become the first branch president.

A distinguished Parliamentarian, Sir Edward served in the

Royal Navy during World War II and represented his Taunton constituency in Somerset for a record 31 years until he retired in 1987.

In addition to his Parliamentary career, he held a number of high-profile appointments in the business world, including that of the chairman of the Lonrho Group.

Now living in the Paphos region of Cyprus and enjoying his retirement, S/M du Cann was welcomed to the branch by chairman, Lt Cdr Nobby Hall, and introduced to around 70 of the island's members at a pre-Christmas branch lunch at the Episkopi Village Inn.

Whitby branch closes

THE TREASURER of Whitby branch has reported that because of falling numbers the branch has ceased to exist.

S/M Philip Waite said that because of illness and deaths amongst the membership, attendance at meetings had dropped to as low as three on some occasions.

As a result, the branch ceased to exist since November 30.

The standard was laid up two days beforehand at a ceremony in the parish church of St Mary's, which stands on the cliff-top adjacent to the famous abbey.

Memorial erected to shipmates

THANKS to members of Dartmouth branch, a granite memorial has been erected in Royal Avenue Gardens on the North Embankment.

The memorial is inscribed 'In lasting memory of all Shipmates who have crossed the bar', and bears the Association's crest.

The memorial, dedicated by the Revd Simon Wright, was unveiled by Commodore Tony Johnstone-Burt, Commanding Officer of BRNC Dartmouth.

Shipmates turned out in strength for the ceremony, as did relatives of the deceased members of the Association.

Sparkling occasion for diamond couple

OLDHAM branch members have celebrated the Diamond Wedding of two of their shipmates, Joan and Stan Overy.

They both joined the Royal Navy in the 1940s, with Stan serving in Fleet minesweepers in Normandy and also in the River-class corvette HMS Tweed.

Joan served with HMS Beaver, Grimsby.

The couple married in

Cleethorpes in 1940, and family members put on a party to remember – a wonderful buffet, free bar and disco.

Oldham branch presented Stan with a bottle of rum and Joan with a bouquet of flowers.

Members also presented the couple with individual gifts.

Joan and Stan then went on to prove that they can still shake a mean leg!

Soapy pays tribute to Far East victims

ON A visit to their daughter in Bangkok, S/M Soapy Watson, Area 4 Public Relations Officer, and his wife Anne were invited by the British Ambassador to take part in a Remembrance service in the Embassy grounds.

The couple, whose daughter lives in Thailand, had taken two poppy wreaths to Bangkok with them, from No 4 Area South West Flotilla and from the Bristol branch of the Burma

Star Association, and two poppy crosses from the same groups.

The wreaths were laid at the war memorial in the Embassy grounds, and the day after the Remembrance service the wreath from the Burma Star veterans was taken on to Kanchanburi war cemetery and laid at the war memorial there.

The poppy crosses were left in the Jeath War Museum in Kanchanburi.

Marie mourned

THE many friends of S/M Dennis Judge, especially of No 1 Area and the Battersea branch, where he was the Public Relations Officer, will be saddened to hear of the death of his wife Marie, a stalwart supporter of her husband and of the Association.

Marie died on Boxing Day while on holiday in the Isle of Wight.

Safe standard

THE HOUNSLAW branch standard was laid up in safe-keeping at the conclusion of the Hanworth branch Carol Service, at which music was supplied by the Surrey Yeomanry.

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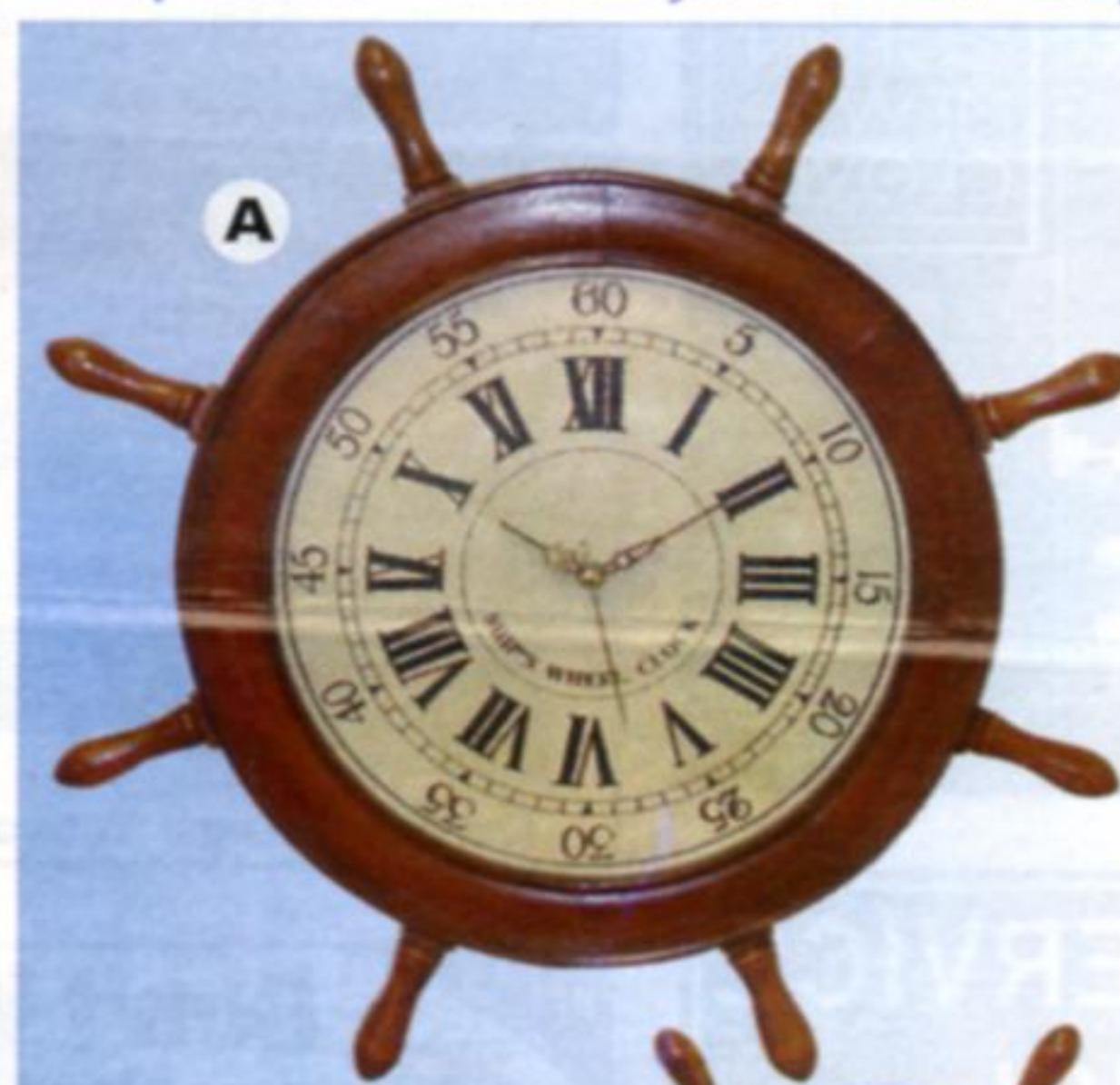
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Fond farewell to the Islands

THE LAST of a class of ship born out of the Icelandic 'Cod Wars' of 30 years ago were due to be handed over to their new owners shortly after *Navy News* went to press.

HMS Lindisfarne and HMS Guernsey were the sole survivors in the Royal Navy of the seven Island-class ships, and are soon to join four of their sisters in service with the Bangladeshi Navy.

The confrontations between British and Icelandic ships in the early 1970s indicated that the use of frigates in such situations was far from ideal.

The best solution seemed to be a class of ship designed in the style of the vessels which plied their trade in that inhospitable region – ocean-going trawlers.

And so HMS Jersey was launched by Princess Anne at the yard of Hall Russell in Aberdeen in 1976, entering service with the Royal Navy's Fishery Protection Squadron.

Over the next three years Jersey was joined by sisters Guernsey, Orkney, Shetland, Lindisfarne, Alderney and Anglesey – all named after British islands.

The class soon made their presence known – Jersey detained a Russian fishing vessel during her first patrol – and over the years hundreds of vessels flouting the law have been caught by these 1,000-ton ships and handed over to the authorities.

The fishing community's view of the Islands was demonstrated when on a visit to Vigo for the World Fishing Exhibition, HMS Guernsey announced it was hosting a reception on board for all those present who had been arrested by ships of the Fishery Protection Squadron.

Despite misgivings in some quarters, the party was well-attended and a great success – a tribute to Island-class diplomacy.

Other roles undertaken by the ships included search and rescue, counter-drugs operations, and on one occasion HMS Shetland acted as a temporary Royal Yacht after Prince Charles' helicopter was grounded by fog during a royal visit to the Scilly Isles.

These durable ships were often quickly on the scene at major incidents, breaking off from patrols to help with the rescue operation or to co-ordinate emergency services.

Anglesey was one of the first vessels on the scene during the disastrous Fastnet Race in August 1979, when the race fleet of 303 was hit by a vicious storm which killed 17 and wrecked dozens of boats.

The following year HMS Lindisfarne was the first warship to help search for survivors and retrieve bodies from the water when the Norwegian Aleksander Kielland oil rig capsized.

For her part in the operation Lindisfarne won the thanks of the people of Stavanger, a centre of the oil industry in Norway.

In 1984 HMS Orkney recovered many of the bodies from the freighter Radiant Med after the ship sank off Guernsey with the loss of 17 lives, but later that year there was a happier outcome when HMS Jersey went to the aid of French transatlantic yachtswoman Monique Brand after her boat was damaged in bad weather.

The ships were often called on to lend a hand in cases of failed engines – in one case, in 1991, HMS Anglesey took a Peterhead fishing vessel in tow after she lost all power in seas which the Commanding Officer described as the biggest he had ever seen, with waves towering up to 60ft.

Anglesey had a particularly hectic time at the end of 2001, when her boat crew rescued two men in a motor cruiser drifting through surf towards rocks off Plymouth in bad weather, then her firefighters helped suppress a fire on board the merchantman Rosebank off Sunderland, and finally she picked up crewmen of a sinking freighter in the Western Approaches.

The only Island-class ship not to join the Bangladeshi was HMS Orkney, which was bought by the Trinidad and Tobago Coastguard and renamed Nelson.



● HMS Orkney pictured in 1992. The Island-class owe their existence to the need for patrol vessels – a need made apparent by incidents such as that pictured below



● HMS Guernsey sails into Portsmouth trailing her paying-off pennant, marking the end of the Island-class patrol ships' service in Royal Navy



● The Icelandic gunboat Odinn attempts to ram Leander-class frigate HMS Naiad in May 1976 during one of the 'Cod Wars'

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SAILORS AND ROYAL MARINES SAMPLE ADVENTURE IN THE ICY WASTES, THE LUSH VALLEYS AND THE SANDY WADIS OF THE WORLD

Darren earns medal for swift action

THE selfless actions of Royal Marine Darren Swift on the treacherous upper slopes of the world's highest mountain have been rewarded.

L/Cpl Swift was part of a combined RN-RM team scaling Mount Everest in the 50th anniversary of the first successful ascent.

He and teammates were in a second batch of mountaineers about to make their attempt at the summit, following the success of WO Dave Pearce in May last year.

But the attempt was abandoned in favour of helping two stricken climbers.

Mancunian Conan Harrod broke his leg at 8,500 metres and was helped down the mountain initially by Australian Peter Madew - who in turn developed frostbite and snow-blindness.

It was left to L/Cpl Swift to get Mr Madew down Everest to base camp so he could be taken to hospital for treatment.

His actions earned him a Silver Medal from the Royal Humane Society, which he received from Princess Alexandra at Buckingham Palace last month.

"It was like baby-sitting for a 6ft tall clumsy baby," said the green beret based with UK Land Forces CSG at Stonehouse.

The Australian guy was in a bad way. He was exhausted, suffering from frostbite. He couldn't do the simplest of tasks like using crampons.

"It takes a lot out of you but you shouldn't worry about your own problems when it comes to saving a guy's life."

Both civilian climbers recovered from their ordeal thanks to one of the world's highest mountain rescues.

"I've not seen him since," said Darren. "But he e-mailed the expedition website to thank us which was nice of him."

Desert tour proves good Oman for HMS Kent

HMS Kent's heads of department took the heat off smugglers to sample the heat of the desert before the frigate turned for home from the Gulf.

During a break from operations, the Portsmouth frigate put into Muscat in Oman.

Marine engineer officer Ned Kelly, logistics officer Stuart Lawrence, weapons engineer officer Tim Currass, operations officer Mike Jones-Thompson and executive officer Oli Hutchinson, managed to leave the troubles of running a Type 23 frigate behind to explore the Ghubrah Bowl - an extinct volcanic crater 10 miles across.

The crater was the first stop on a 4x4 trek through some of least visited spots in the sultanate.

The offroader rocked along a dry river bed known as the Wadi Mistal then climbed the crater wall to reach a hill-side village called Wakan.

"We settled down around a campfire with some well-cooked steaks, and enjoyed the absolute peace and quiet of our rocky perch before getting our heads down under a bright, starry sky," said Ned.

The night also brought some surprises - not least scorpions and snakes hiding under every rock.

Come daylight, the officers trekked up the mountainside on foot, through the village and neighbouring hanging gardens.

"The locals were as interested in their unexpected visitors as we were in them - it's regretful we couldn't spend the day in the village," Ned added.

"All too soon we found ourselves back at the ship and life as normal."



Green berets go California jumpin'



● The green berets of CLR unfurl the Corps' flag before their jump...

GREEN berets are used to making the odd tumble...
...but possibly not at several thousand feet over the valleys of California.

A team of Royal Marines from the Commando Logistics Regiment in Devon decided there was no better wind-down after operations in Iraq than skydiving in the west coast sunshine of the USA.

A ten-strong team brushed up on their technique at the Joint Services Parachute Centre in Netheravon before heading west for two weeks of non-stop jumping in Exercise First Tumble.

The commandos raced through parachuting qualifications at Lake Elsinore, not far from San Diego, stepping out of aircraft to the cries of "It will change your life, dude!" from their American cousins.

C/Sgt Steve 'Sharky' Ward said beyond the standard leaps and free falls, the commandos managed to unfurl the corps flag, and the whole team doffed clothes for a naked jump.

The most moving experience, however, was a leap as the sun went down.

"You could take your time under the canopy and enjoy the awesome sunset over the valleys - and each final landing of the day was greeted with lads waiting with cold beers ready for you to swoop and grab a can as you flew by," said Sharky.

The hospital of Coronado Naval Air Station gave the jumpers the chance to sample the delights of San Diego, just 15 minutes away, or chill out away from the cold and wet of their usual home in Chivenor.

"Temperatures regularly hit the 90s - the only escape was the dropzone pool. It became the focus for stress relief and a gathering area for the daily debriefs," the senior NCO added.

"Most evenings we would barbecue to the max and frequent a trendy nightspot called the Hideaway."

The team reluctantly returned to Devon with a string of new qualifications and experiences to their credit.

The commandos are already planning a return later this year.



● ...and C/Sgt Sharky Ward touches down safely on the Californian turf

A taste of Victory for iceman Dom

ADVENTURER and green beret Dom Mee has returned historic artefacts from the Victory to their rightful place in the UK.

Not Nelson's flagship, but the lesser known vessel used by 19th century Arctic explorer Sir John Ross.

Victory was lost in a doomed expedition to find the fabled North-west Passage in 1831.

The boat was stripped by Ross and his crew of useful items before she disappeared beneath the ice.

More than 170 years on Dom, a Royal Marines Reservist, retraced the route - and received some of the salvaged artefacts from Inuit settlers.

Ross' heroics have largely been ignored by popular history, but his four-year battle with the ice is as dramatic as any in polar exploration.

"His exploits are equal to those of Shackleton and Scott and should never be forgotten," the green beret said.

His 900-mile journey in a 17ft collapsible kayak took him across the icy wastes of northern Canada and the Arctic, kayaking and at times carrying the boat and supplies, despite suffering from four broken ribs - the result of a musk ox attack. The oxes were only one of

Nature's threats, alongside polar bears, walruses, pack ice, and the unforgiving polar landscape and weather. At one point, the commando was trapped in the ice for three days.

"The area makes Dartmoor look like a stroll in Hyde Park," said Dom, now back in Blighty.

"Kayaking through pack ice, surrounded by polar bears with four broken ribs is about as extreme as I would like to be."

Setting off from King William Island he retraced Ross' route, eventually reaching the Inuit settlement of Talyoak.

The indigenous population presented the gutsy adventurer with relics from the Victory, notably remnants of her steam engine.

The items were put on display in London at the International Boat Show before they are returned to the Nanavut government in Canada as 'national treasures'.

He reached the magnetic North Pole - a feat rarely achieved - but the build-up of ice prevented him from progressing much further.

Dom and a colleague came within a whisker of becoming the first people to row the Pacific in the summer of 2001, before their boat was run down by a merchantman.

The Arctic trip was a precursor to Dom's greatest adventure - the first attempt to sail singlehandedly around the world non-stop via the two polar regions. The Quest, as he calls it, is due to take place later this year.

More information on his adventures can be found at www.dommee.co.uk



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It's chime for changes on Merseyside

THE chimes are sounding at Liverpool-based reserve unit HMS Eaglet after it was presented with a replacement bell in time for centenary commemorations.

The RNR base, which serves the north-west region, celebrates its 100th birthday in 2004.

To mark the occasion, local bell-making firm Utley Offshore, which has been casting bells since the days of Queen Victoria, presented a new ship's bell for Eaglet.

The unit's youngest rating, new entry Louise Moore, rang the traditional eight bells to sound the bell for the first time.

Eaglet's team has also been rewarded for its efforts during operations in Iraq 12 months ago.

Thirty personnel from the RNR unit were involved in Operation Telic in the UK and Middle East, serving in a string of positions from logistics and supply to intelligence, amphibious warfare and mine warfare.

Each person mobilised received a certificate of thanks, signed by the nation's most senior military officer, Chief of Defence Staff General Sir Michael Walker, and Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon.

■ LONDON'S Royal Naval Reserve unit HMS President beat off fierce competition from the other 12 RNR centres to take the prestigious Thornycroft Trophy.

The trophy – a ship's model in a glass case – is awarded annually to the reserve unit which maintains the highest standards of efficiency and effectiveness.

With 370 officers and other ranks on the books President, next to Tower Bridge, is one of the largest RNR establishments.

"The trophy is a reflection of all the hard work that has gone on by not only the ship's company but also the permanent staff and our former commanding officer," said President's CO Cdr Clare Hughes.

Marine party for 1914-18 war bugler Stephen

ONE of the Navy's last living links with the Grand Fleet was treated to a 100th birthday celebration at the spiritual home of the Green Berets.

Former bandsman Stephen Butcher joined the Royal Marines Band at the age of just 13 when the RN was locked in a mortal struggle with the Kaiser's Navy.

For the next two and a half decades he served his country in two world wars and the inter-war peace, from the great barracks of Portsmouth and Deal, to mighty battleships such as HMS Barham and the carrier Glorious.

Mr Butcher joined up in 1917, when the drum master turned a blind eye to his height and age. His instructors soon found fault with the eager young musician.

"I was supposed to blow the bugle at my first parade," the centenarian recalled.

"It was a windy day and just as I was about to play the wind blew up the skirts of three young Wrens. I couldn't stop laughing. I had to do an hour's marching as punishment."

Before the Great War was over, the young bugle boy found himself in the veteran cruiser HMS Hyacinth, patrolling off South Africa.

A generation later, the sailor found himself off the coast of Normandy aboard HMS Enterprise, escorting USS Nevada and supporting the bombardment of German positions in the invasion of Fortress Europe.

Enterprise proved to be Mr Butcher's final ship; he was demobbed upon the war's end in 1945.

His 100th birthday was marked with a party at the RM Museum in Eastney – in 1903, the birthplace of the corps' school of music.

● *Former Bandsman Stephen Butcher celebrates reaching 100 with a card from the Queen and (below) as a young musician, Mr Butcher (bottom left) with fellow bandsmen at Deal 80 years ago.*

Pictures: Portsmouth News



Reservists' deeds remembered



● *Prince Charles signs a montage of six RN and Commonwealth vessels strongly connected with the reserve forces to help raise money for the RNVR memorial at the Naval Club*

Picture: CPO Wayne Humphries

THE deeds and sacrifices made by reserve sailors from the Commonwealth have been honoured by the Prince of Wales in one of the last acts commemorating the centenary of the Royal Naval Reserve.

The prince unveiled a plaque at the Naval Club – formerly the RNVR Club – in London's Mayfair to pay tribute to the men of Australia, India, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa who served in the volunteer reserve navies of their nations.

Veterans from the RNVR, Australia, Canada and India saw the unveiling of the plaque, which features six Second World War vessels with strong reserve links, one for each Commonwealth country plus the UK. HMS Avenger was

chosen to represent Britain; her loss in 1942 off Gibraltar was the worst disaster involving RNVR personnel in the 1939-1945 conflict.

Jim Cowie, former president of the Alberta branch of the Canadian Naval Officers' Association presented Prince Charles with a painting of Up Spirits aboard HMS Endymion in 1904, which the prince in turn presented to the club.

The heir to the throne also signed a montage painting of all six vessels, which features the signatures of the Chiefs of Naval Staff from the six nations. Prints will be produced in due course with proceeds going to the Wave Heritage Trust, which maintains the RNVR war memorial at the Naval Club.

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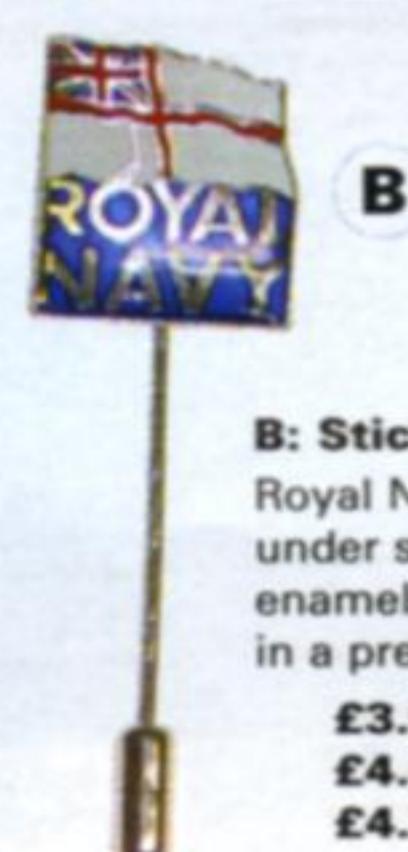
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Survey ship is off to the Gulf

HMS ECHO, one of the Royal Navy's two new multi-role survey vessels, has sailed for the Gulf on her first deployment.

The ship will initially operate off the South Coast of England for final preparations before heading to the Middle East, where she will gather hydrographic data as part of the United Kingdom's continued support to the region.

This area has not been surveyed to modern standards for many years and HMS Echo will continue the work that HMS Roebuck began during her deployment last year to update admiralty charts to ensure the safe navigation of the waters for both civil and military users.

HMS Echo has a ship's company of 72 and operates a crew rotation system whereby 48 members of the crew are on board at any one time while the remainder are on leave or undergoing training back in the UK.

This allows the ship to be available for operations for 334 days per year, averaged over 25 years.

The ship is not scheduled to return to Devonport until next year.

Commander Martin Jones, Commanding Officer of HMS Echo, said: "Following the building process, trials and training, it is tremendous to be deploying to prove our worth and conduct some vital military data gathering."

Allies gather for exercises

A TOTAL of 15 ships from a number of nations, including Spain, France and the Netherlands, have been engaged in routine exercises off the South Coast of England.

RN frigates HM ships Cornwall, Marlborough and Iron Duke and destroyer HMS Liverpool have been taking part in the air-defence and anti-submarine exercises, along with minehunters HMS Sandown and HMS Shoreham.

Foreign warships have been using Devonport as their base for the exercise.

Supply Branch name change reflects role

SAY hello to the LO – from February 1 the Supply Branch will be known as the Logistics Branch, bringing the Logistics Officer (LO) into being.

The move, announced by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral James Burnell-Nugent, is part of the Navy Board's Personnel Change Programme, which seeks to maximise efficiency.

One of the recommendations in last year's Commander-in-Chief Fleet sponsored study into the competencies required for the Navy of the future was the need to rename the RN Supply Branch to reflect its role, and the name switch has now been confirmed.

The official Joint Service definition of 'logistics output' outlines logistics as the process of planning, implementing and controlling the efficient flow and storage of material, services and information.

'Services' in this case covers all administration services, such as financial, legal, secretarial and personnel.

At rating level, the Branch embraces Chefs/Caterers, Stores Accountants, Stewards and Writers, and will continue to deliver the core functions that form the broad basis of the new Logistics Branch.

There are no plans to change any rate titles or badges associated with these specialisations.

Officers in the Branch are broadly-based logisticians, covering all aspects of operational logistic support (except the 'float and move' responsibilities of the Engineering Branch), as well as personnel administration.

The term 'Supply', although having a long and proud tradition within the Royal Navy, has little relevance outside the Service and is not well-understood in the Joint or MOD civilian environment, let alone by the increasing number of external civilian organisations with whom the Navy now works closely.

The change to 'Logistics' reflects reality and a change of emphasis, rather than direction, matching more effectively the tasks



● Members of the various trades and skills of the Logistics Branch, formerly the Supply Branch, demonstrate their loyalty to the new banner on the flight deck of HMS Ocean in Devonport

now routinely undertaken by officers and ratings within the Branch and the areas of expertise in which they will continue to develop.

Development of the Future Navy calls for greater emphasis on logistics and sustainability through

integration between the three Services and industry.

Senior Navy officers believe that changing the name of the Supply Branch reflects the critical role that operational logistics assumes within Defence activities, and is

part of the overall change programme that has already witnessed significant advances in training and employment which will equip the Branch and its members for the Royal Navy's needs in the next decade and beyond.

New title for Nelson

HMS NELSON has a new name to reflect the regeneration of the Queen Street site and its importance to the Navy.

The site has been undergoing major building work since it was incorporated into the Naval Base at the turn of the century, and as of February 2 will be known as the Nelson Personnel Centre (NPC), to reflect the wide range of services provided at the personnel hub of the Eastern areas.

The former HMS Nelson (Queen Street Site) has seen dramatic changes to its skyline, with the demolition of tower blocks and

the construction of four single living accommodation (SLA) blocks for junior rates – Project Emma.

The four blocks provide 550 single en-suite cabins, and the first two blocks have already been occupied, with the rest following in the coming weeks.

Other accommodation blocks are due for refurbishment, while some buildings will be demolished later this year.

The NPC is also the home of the Regional Rehabilitation Unit (RRU) Portsmouth – a primary care centre to co-ordinate the clinical management of patients with more significant musculo-skeletal injuries.

The Divisional care and support to Servicemen and women on board ships or in establishments will continue as before, but will now be delivered by Theseus Division.

FSL became responsible for facilities management within the

NPC since last August, and the FSL Customer Services Centre is available through a telephone menu on 9380 2020, choosing 1 as the first option.

In addition to the changes, existing services are still available and continue to develop, including support facilities such as medical, dental, UPO, stores, NPFS (including the new tri-Service legal advice centre on 023 9266 0261), the Chaplaincy, Base Education Centre, gymnasium (with its new cardio-vascular suite), DHE, NPM and the Victory Club.

Maj Richard Tyrrell RM, First Lieutenant, said: "The NPC is there to support individuals and ship's companies as a whole."

"Executive Officers, Executive Warrant Officers and Divisional Officers should all make themselves familiar with the support which the NPC can offer, and thus ensure their teams make best use of this local centre of excellence."

HMS Cricket pitch

A QUIET stretch of woodland by the Hamble River in Hampshire was the site of something akin to a small town during World War II. The area, in Manor Farm Country Park, was the site of HMS Cricket – a Combined Operations and landing craft base for the Allied push into Europe.

Cricket had its own roads, services, cinema, medical facilities, ammunition compounds and other infrastructure necessary to support more than 4,000 Service personnel. And although little evidence remains – several docking bays are still visible and the old Guardroom can still be seen – plans for a permanent reminder of the base are coming to fruition.

Veterans who visited their old stamping ground ten years ago

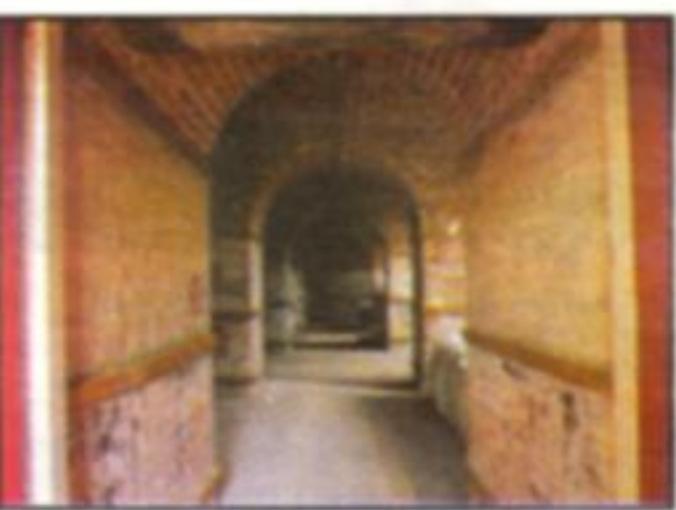
expressed a strong desire to see a memorial to lost comrades and a record of their service, and the baton was taken up by a group of local residents.

Now a memorial is to be unveiled by Countess Mountbatten of Burma on June 2, with a lunch reception for invited guests – including a number of veterans.

Organisers wish to hear from any veterans, or relatives of those who died at D-Day or subsequent actions.

Contact Bob and Rosemary Nimmo at 10, Oatlands Close, Botley, Southampton SO32 2DF, (01489 782820) as soon as possible.

They would also like to hear from anyone with reminiscences, pictures or documents to form part of a permanent exhibition.



● C Magazine at Priddy's Hard – said to be haunted

Ghost walks are popular

REPORTED sightings of ghosts and stories of gory deaths at the former armaments depot of Priddy's Hard have been researched by staff at Explosion! the Museum of Naval Firepower.

The investigations were undertaken to prepare for a series of ghost walks at the Gosport museum site – and the idea has proved so popular that the January and February walks sold out by the end of last year.

A trawl through the records has uncovered a dozen bloody deaths at the historic buildings, which date back to the 18th and 19th centuries.

Research Assistant Ian Proctor said: "I have been amazed by the disturbing tales of death and disease that have happened over the centuries here at Priddy's Hard."

"The untimely deaths have happened as a result of accidental explosions, and in one case an 'unnatural' gust of wind, rumoured to be the evil spirit of a convict labourer who died in the same spot."

"Sightings of many of the unfortunate souls have been rumoured by former workers of the Royal Navy Armaments Depot."

These include a bloodstain appearing on the wall of a room over the site of one fatal explosion.

Other violent deaths included four men who died in 1921 when detonators went up in a fireball.

More Ghost Walks at Explosion! are planned for the autumn. For more information, telephone 023 9250 5600 or see the www.explosion.org.uk

Wrens flock to Pompey

WRENS are planning major celebrations in Portsmouth next year as both the Association of Wrens and the local branch mark significant anniversaries.

The Portsmouth branch will hold a Jubilee Birthday party on the weekend of Friday September 9, 2005, to mark the 60th anniversary of the formation of the oldest branch in the Association.

And as 2005 also sees the Association itself celebrate 85 years, a commemorative service is planned for the city's Anglican cathedral on September 10.

Other events include a social get-together, a formal dinner and a programme of guided tours.

For more information on the weekend's events, plus an accommodation package, costs and social programme, contact Mary Brittan at 44 Highgrove Road, Copnor, Portsmouth PO3 6PR, or at Building 29, HMS Excellent, Whale Island, Portsmouth PO2 8ER, enclosing an SAE.

Mary said anyone considering joining the party who needs accommodation should contact her soon, as a number of other major events are taking place in Portsmouth in 2005, not least celebrations for the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

Model event

A SCALE model of the first powered aircraft will be one of the main attractions at the Fleet Air Arm Museum's eighth annual Model Show on Sunday February 14.

More than 100 stands will provide everything needed for model-building as well as giving the clubs a chance to make their pitches to enthusiasts and beginners alike.

Full access will also be available to the Yeovil museum at normal admission prices.



● Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral James Burnell-Nugent officially opens the new Chaplaincy at HMS Drake in Plymouth

Picture: LA(PHOT) McClure

Offices turned upside down

A REFURBISHMENT of the Chaplaincy Centre at HMS Drake has led to the place being turned upside down.

For what was downstairs is now upstairs and what was up is now down.

Fisher Block has been the home of the Drake/Naval Base Chaplaincy Team since the mid-1980s when, in what for the time was considered to be quite a radical move, the Chaplains of the three main denominational groupings came together under one roof.

Since then very little had changed structurally, but at the time of the last major re-decoration, the

Chaplaincy team decided they needed to make better use of the space available to create a friendly, demilitarised environment.

To do this the downstairs offices have been moved upstairs and in their place there is now a large open, welcoming and comfortable reception area together with a "parish" meeting room.

Work started on the project in January 2003 and the building is now ready for use with Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral James Burnell-Nugent, doing the honours by cutting the ribbon to formally reopen the centre.

A MEMORIAL cairn has been erected in Scotland which recognises the service of Fleet Air Arm personnel as well as their comrades at RAF Peterhead from 1941-45.

The cairn, of pink Aberdeen granite with a black marble insert, bears the crest of the RAF, an RAF pilot's wings and the wings of a Fleet Air Arm pilot, following research which revealed that at least four RN squadrons were

Peterhead squadrons recalled

based there – 883, 884 and 886 in 1942 and 899 in 1944.

The unveiling ceremony was the culmination of a year's hard work by members of the Longside branch of the Royal British Legion (Scotland).

During the ceremony, PO Sharp, a helicopter winchman from Gannet SAR at Prestwick in Ayr, laid a wreath on behalf of the Fleet Air Arm.

Death rate of Gulf veterans lower than non-veterans

VETERANS of the first Gulf War have a lower death rate than their forces colleagues who did not go to the Middle East.

Statistics experts at Whitehall have pored over information of more than 53,000 men and women who served in the 1990-91 campaign – and a similar number of comrades who stayed behind.

They found 632 Gulf veterans had died since the war compared with 643 non veterans of the war, and there were less disease-related deaths among the Kuwait campaign survivors.

Many survivors of the 1990-91 campaign claim they suffer from Gulf War 'syndrome' which has crippled their health since.

The study by the Defence Analytical Services Agency found 113 Gulf veterans had taken their own lives compared with 108 in the personnel who served elsewhere.

Road deaths were also higher among Gulf veterans – 124 men and women have lost their lives in accidents compared to 101 people who did not go to the desert.

115 Gulf veterans have been killed by cancer; 130 in the comparison group fell victim to the disease.

"The release of the statistics underlines the MOD's commitment to investigate Gulf War illnesses openly and honestly," said Veterans' Minister Ivor Caplin.

The full report can be found on the internet at www.dasa.mod.uk

Personalities sign up here

NAVAL personalities are needed to see if psychologists are spot on or talking mumbo-jumbo with their theories about life.

The BBC is looking for RN personnel – civilian and military – to take part in a TV show which will put the ideas of psychological experts to the test.

The Beeb wants to see if the experts' theories about personality types match real people or not.

It needs a 100-strong audience from a cross section of society, and wants some RN personnel to take part.

Applicants who feel they might be suitable – no place in the final 100 'guinea pigs' on the show is guaranteed – will have to fill in a personality questionnaire as well as an application form.

Details are available from Kate Padfield in Victory Building, Portsmouth, on military 9380 27116.

In memory of Jonny

FRIENDS and colleagues of junior rating Jonny Martin are invited to gather at HMS Collingwood this month to celebrate his life.

A memorial service for the OM(C) will be held at the Farnham establishment's St George's Church on February 19 at 4pm.

Details from Sue Eddiford on 01923 838083.

Homeless centre help

A PORTSMOUTH-based charity which provides help and support to homeless people in the south Hampshire area – many of them ex-service personnel – is looking for help from the public to continue its service.

Central Point, based in Kingston Road, provides a daily drop-in service for homeless people, offers advice, clothes, laundry facilities and hot food.

It needs clothes and toiletries in particular. Details from Central Point on 023 9229 8791 or at 22-24 Kingston Road, Portsmouth.



Farewell, Geordie Gunboat

• Veteran destroyer HMS Newcastle sails past Portsmouth's famous Round Tower at the beginning of an anti-terror patrol in the Mediterranean, waved off by loved ones. See page 2

Picture: LA(Phot) Yam Yam Reynolds

Delays 'disappointing' but HMS Astute is now on a fixed course

• A computer graphic of HMS Astute at sea



A GOVERNMENT watchdog says it is disappointed with continuing delays to some of the military's most important new projects – including the Astute class submarines.

But the National Audit Office says Whitehall is getting to grips with programmes to introduce new kit to Britain's armed forces.

The audit office says most of the problems with increased costs and delays to future projects dates from the days before Whitehall brought in its 'smart acquisition' initiative to get the best value for taxpayers and the military.

Three Astutes were ordered by the MOD back in 1997 for £1.9bn, with the first of the boats – intended as replacements for the Swiftsure and Trafalgar – earmarked to join the Fleet around 2005.

The NAO said problems with Astute centred on new design techniques using computers, a shortage of skilled workers at BAE Systems' Barrow yard where the boats are being built, and the sheer complexities of the vessels meant Astute herself was running 43 months late with a predicted extra cost to the programme of £886m.

The auditors say BAE and the Defence Procurement Agency, which oversees new projects for the



Opening salvos in a century of war at sea



• The Russian Navy gives the Japanese Fleet a bloody nose, as depicted in a Russian postcard of the day... not quite how it turned out

Picture: BBC History Magazine

THE Naval war which heralded the 20th century and the era of the dreadnoughts opened in dramatic fashion 100 years ago this month.

The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 had ramifications far beyond the Far East – leading to the Royal Navy to the Dreadnought revolution.

The war opened with 'blitzkrieg' attack by the Japanese Fleet on the Russian squadron at Port Arthur on February 8/9 1904 and culminated in the crushing Japanese victory at Tsushima in May 1905, when a Russian Fleet which had sailed from European waters and endured a 'voyage of the damned' to reach the Far East, was routed off the southern tip of Korea. The battle was the swansong of the pre-Dreadnought era.

The Imperial Japanese Navy was modelled on the Senior Service and its commander at Tsushima, Admiral Togo, is lauded as Japan's Nelson. Like Victory, his flagship is preserved as a museum piece.

Togo hoisted the famous 'Z signal' to spur his Fleet on: "The rise or fall of the Empire depends on today's battle. Let every man do his utmost," words which echo the British hero's rallying cry at Trafalgar a century before.

The RN incorporated some of the lessons of Tsushima in the revolutionary battleship HMS Dreadnought, laid down within six months of the battle, not least that in modern Naval clashes smaller calibre guns were relatively ineffective.

Despite victory at Tsushima, Japan was being crippled by the financial burden of the war. Both sides sued for peace later in 1905; the war had cost the Russians 90,000 dead and Japan 74,000.

Navy News will be following anniversary events over the coming 18 months, including Type 42 destroyer HMS Exeter's planned visit to Japan later this year as part of her Far East deployment.

Soul of tragic Wakeful is coming home



• HMS Wakeful pictured hours before she was sunk and (inset) the ship's encrusted badge taken from the wreck site

There'll be Lynxes over the white cliffs of Dover...

A ROYAL Navy helicopter has been conducting trials from the top of a cliff – and cross-Channel ferries were the aircraft's targets.

The Lynx landed at Dover Coastguard Station atop the famous White Cliffs for a series of evaluation tests which lasted three days.

The trials involved routine investigations of the Lynx radar and fire control systems, and throughout the trials the helicopter remained static.

Officials co-operated with ferry companies, who allowed global positioning system (GPS) recorders to be fitted to their cross-Channel vessels.

The Coastguard landing facility on the cliffs is the only place in southern Britain that has the required coastal elevation and density of maritime traffic for the radar work, which involved the calibration of the aircraft's radar. It is in full view of most of the town of Dover, and has uninterrupted views

of shipping in the Straits of Dover.

There was also a cost saving – the trials would otherwise have required many hours of flying time with the aircraft laden with instrumentation.

The fire control system for the helicopter's Sea Skua anti-ship missiles was also under evaluation, for which the Lynx was fitted with a laboratory 'dummy' missile packed with diagnostic equipment.

There is a strong Naval connection with the surroundings for the trial.

Tunnels in the White Cliffs were used during World War II by Flag Officer Dover.

The Dunkirk evacuation, Operation Dynamo, was controlled from there – and the establishment there was known as HMS Lynx.

Royal Navy Lynx helicopters are based ashore at RN Air Station Yeovilton in Somerset, and normally operate from frigates and destroyers.

THE nameplate and badge from tragic destroyer HMS Wakeful were returning to the Navy's principal museum as *Navy News* went to press.

The icons from the destroyer, lost off Dunkirk during the evacuation of 1940, were recovered by divers working on the wreck to safeguard shipping in the area.

Wakeful had already successfully ferried more than 600 exhausted troops home to Britain and had picked up a second batch when she was torpedoed in the small hours of May 29.

The destroyer broke in two and sank in 15 seconds, taking down with her around 100 crew and more than 600 soldiers. Just 25 crew and a single soldier were rescued.

In recent years port officials in Zeebrugge and Antwerp have been concerned that the wreck posed a danger to shipping in the area.

Wakeful lies in little more than 50 feet of water off the Belgian coast.

Salvage experts decided late last year that Wakeful – an official war grave – need not be moved, but about 10ft of superstructure could be removed instead to allow ships to pass, while maintaining the war grave's integrity.

Divers recovered the crest and name plaque during that operation; the funnel and other navigational equipment moved have been fixed to Wakeful's side.

No human remains were disturbed during the operation.

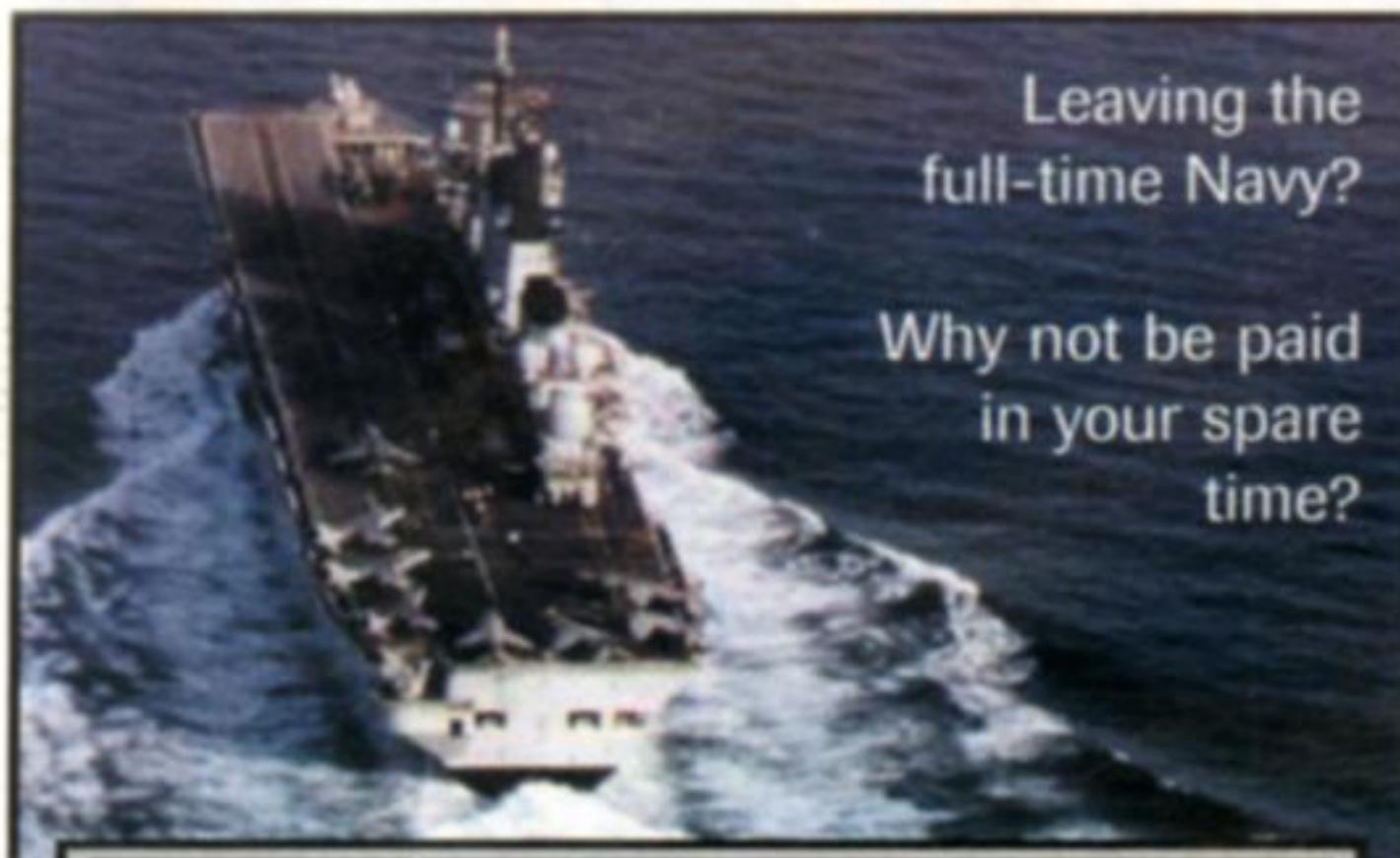
The plate and badge were being presented to Britain's Ambassador to Belgium, Richard Kinchen, at a ceremony in Ypres, before being passed on to the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth's historic dockyard.

Antiques on show on TV

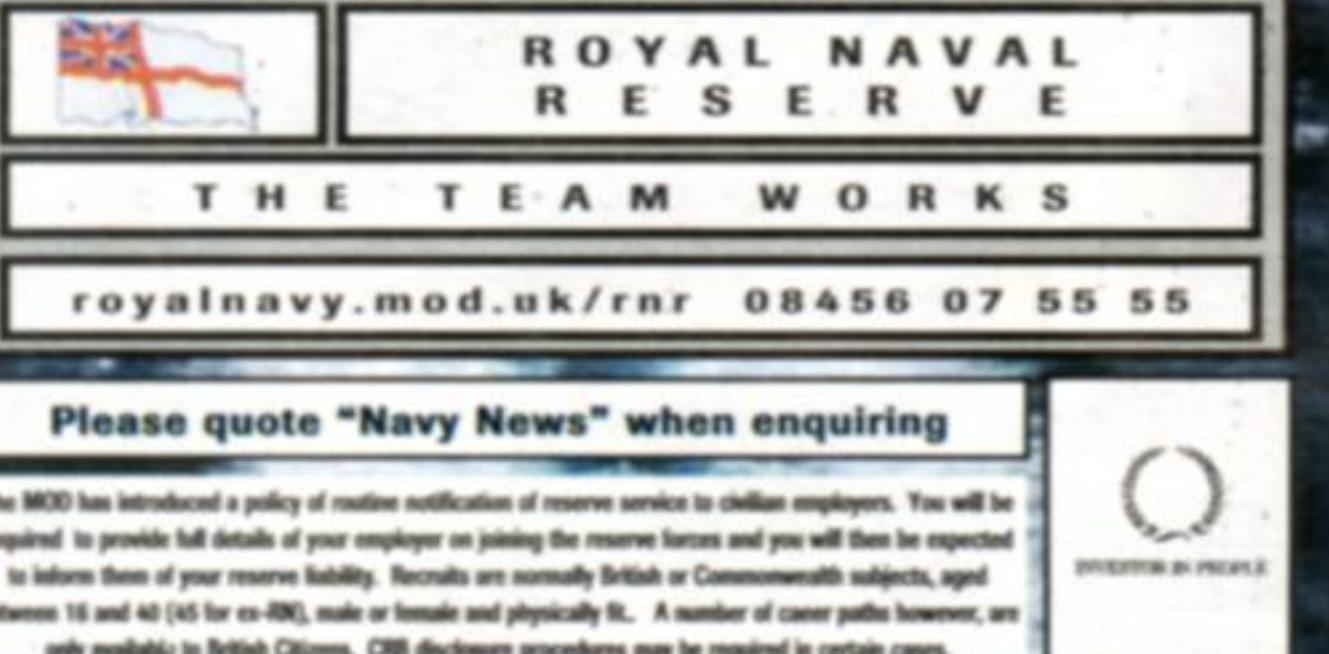
POPULAR treasure trove TV series *Antiques Roadshow*'s visit to Gosport can be seen on February 1 on BBC1.

The programme was recorded last year at the Royal Hospital Haslar, with elements filmed at the neighbouring RN Submarine Museum, and saw some hidden Naval delights brought to light.

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In 2005, Welbeck relocates to Loughborough in Leicestershire when it opens its brand new £38 million PFI-funded building providing state-of-the-art education, sports and accommodation facilities.

Only 120 places a year are offered, with students coming from all backgrounds and from across the UK - 87 per cent are from comprehensive schools and a third are female.

Applicants must apply in their final GCSE year. Minimum entry requirements are 30 points from the best five GCSEs and students must show leadership potential.

Selection is a rigorous and highly competitive procedure. After meeting the principal and military staff, the College Board scrutinises all applications with successful entrants taking part in a 24-hour selection process.

Selection boards are held in spring and summer, comprising interviews, written and physical tests, and successful applicants are notified for the following academic year.

A level education is paramount at Welbeck with specialist academic staff teaching small classes of up to 12 people.

Students average 390 UCAS points (equivalent to three grade As and a B) and attention is focussed on technical subjects, predominantly maths, sciences, information technology, technology, electronics and geography. Meanwhile tri-service personnel provide pastoral care, military careers advice, sports and training.

The most successful A level students go on to take Services-sponsored engineering degrees at one of seven partner universities - Oxford, Cambridge, Southampton, Newcastle, Northumbria, Loughborough and Aston.

Royal Navy-sponsored undergraduates are supported financially with officer training provided by military support units. Cadets then progress to officer training at Dartmouth followed by a commission as an aircraft, marine or weapons engineer.

At the Defence Sixth Form College, Cadet training is as



important as academic life. Students join the College Combined Cadet Force (CCCF) for regular training in which they develop leadership qualities and teamwork - no previous Cadet Force experience is necessary.

Meanwhile a vibrant social scene provides free time for shopping, theatre, art exhibitions, films and socialising.

Sports facilities and opportunities are second to none with students enjoying outward bound and adventurous training activities too.

And because Welbeck is fully residential, sporting and academic facilities are available seven days a week, with regular expeditions organised from walking and climbing in the UK to skiing and diving overseas.

Welbeck is funded by the Ministry of Defence which funds

tuition fees, with maintenance fees heavily subsidised according to parents' residual income. Average termly fees are £400-£600 with free places available to low-income families.

Tony Halliwell, principal of Welbeck says: "We offer superlative A level education and the strongest start for military engineers. We are delighted to be offering places to Navy students next year and to opening our spectacular new building in 2005 which will provide some of the UK's best education and sporting facilities."

"Our unique combination of academic and military education gives students a genuine insight into the military officer career ahead of them."

Parents and students keen to discuss places should contact: Lt Jo Goodship, 02392 727750.

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Readers' writes

Jessie Kitchen age 8 (mem. no. 3169)

"My Dad is currently serving in HMS Glasgow. Glasgow sailed from Portsmouth Harbour on November 2, 2003 and will be returning to port in May 2004. The ship and her crew have so far visited Dakar, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Angola and spent Christmas and the New Year in Cape Town, South Africa.

While in Sierra Leone, the ship's crew volunteered both their time and expertise to build a playground in the grounds of a children's orphanage. When the playground was complete, my Dad, LOM Steve Kitchen, accompanied the Captain to the orphanage - he said he wanted to bring all the children home with him (and my Mum would probably let him, too!).

On December 21 my Mum flew out to Cape Town to join Dad for a holiday of a lifetime. HMS Glasgow left there on January 5 to go on to South Georgia, the Falkland Islands, Montevideo, Brazil, The Gambia and Gibraltar."

Laura Wood age 8 (mem. no. 2886)

"My Grandad keeps telling me that when he was in HMS Letterstone in 1968-70 they had a dog called Oppo on board. I think he is making a fool of me - is he right or not?"

Does anyone know? - Ed

Adam Spivey age 10 (mem. no. 423)

"I am writing to thank you for the prize of the Portsmouth Football Club Manager Game. My sister and I have spent a lot of time on it and thoroughly enjoyed playing with it. My sister is football mad at the moment - she supports Leeds United but is just as happy to play with the Portsmouth game as my Dad used to watch Portsmouth a lot when he was in the Navy."

Can we have your new addresses?

James Blanchett (2903), Christopher Derrick (697), James Haswell (1691), Charlotte Ireland (2868), Kate Ireland (2867), Naomi Matthews (2980), Oliver Mitchell (2953), Peter Petzing (1711), Ben Pullen (528) and Ben Reynolds (2958).



MAKING Waves, the new Navy drama series soon to appear on ITV, is the first for over 30 years!

The last one was Warship in the 1970s.

On BBC radio, though, The Navy Lark was one of the biggest comedy hits ever, running for over 18 years from 1959-77.

It was set on board 'HMS Troubridge' and in 1969 when the real-life Type 15 anti-submarine frigate HMS Troubridge - then also the RN's oldest seagoing warship with 27 years' service - paid her last visit to London, Navy Lark's star actors were invited on board.

Navigating Officer Leslie Phillips - he's the one on the right - famously didn't know port from starboard ('left a bit, right a bit' he would say).

Jon Pertwee (the one on the left) was later even more famous on TV as Dr Who and Worzel Gummidge, while Leslie Phillips moved away from comedy (the 'Carry On' and 'Doctor' films) to top-rated serious character roles (Out of Africa, Empire of the Sun and Scandal).

You can still listen to The Navy Lark on BBC tapes - and they're just as funny today.

Meanwhile, ask your Dad what's wrong with this picture of the two stars clowning it up over the bridge wing compass.

Here's a clue - Pertwee (left) is a commander, Phillips (right) is a humble sub-lieutenant.

We'll send a prize to the first one of you who spots the mistake.

Keep sending your own pictures and drawings in - especially those of ships your Dads and Mums are serving in.

Left a bit, right a bit!



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Why

do we say of someone who's a bit poorly that he's 'under the weather'?

In the days of sail a member of a ship's crew standing watch on the weather, or windward side of the bow would come under the constant beating of the sea - and so would be 'under the weather'.

If you are a member of the Young Readers Club and your one-year free subscription to Navy News has run out, you can get another discounted subscription through YRC. For details call us on 023 9273 3558.

Members birthdays

Celebrating their birthdays in February are YRC members:

Katie Adams
William Arkesden
David Bell
James Blanchett
Ryan Bradley
Matthew Bragg
Iain Broadley
Gary Brook
Emily Broome
Christopher Caine
Denny Casey
Keane Challoner
Thomas Coole
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Where in the world...?



why

do we call something good 'first rate' and something bad 'second rate'? The answer is, in Nelson's day ships were 'rated' according to the number of guns they had. First rates like HMS Victory had 100 or more. Second rates had 90-98 - so they weren't that much less powerful. So calling something bad 'second rate' isn't fair, really. Jack Aubrey's HMS Surprise in the film *Master & Commander* would have been a sixth rate (20-28 guns) and she was pretty good, too. You decide.

James Bond ship was stirred but not shaken

Back in 1976 HMS Fearless had a film crew on board shooting the James Bond film *The Spy Who Loved Me* - when suddenly a real-life drama took over!

Half-way through the first shot on a perfect Sunday morning off Malta, the assault ship turned away to go to the aid of the 6,500 ton Greek cargo ship *Nostros Vassos Athene*, which was on fire and had sent out a distress call.

Firefighting and damage control parties were put on board and as the fire grew fiercer one of the first jobs was to get rid of a lot of highly inflammable deck cargo - including 80 five-gallon drums of Oxidising acid, three drums of benzene, two tons of paint and no fewer than 23 tons of gas lighter fluid.

Later the ship developed a 'loll' owing to the amount of water being pumped into her, but by then the Fearless had her secured alongside and was able to hold her.

In late afternoon the fires appeared to be out, and next morning the Royal Navy ship was able to hand over to harbour tugs.

There were no serious casualties. But some fire and damage control parties stayed on board most of the day while the film unit calmly completed their task.

Before leaving they sent the following message: 'From James Bond film unit to HMS Fearless. Many thanks for a good shoot. A highly eventful week when many were stirred but none were shaken. Signed 007.'

• HMS Fearless (right) alongside the burning Greek ship *Nostros Vassos Athene*



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This month

February 1, 1873: RN College Greenwich opened
February 4, 1918: HMS Zubian sank UC.50 off Essex coast. HMS Zulu had been mined off Dunkirk on November 8, 1916 and HMS Nubian torpedoed on October 27. Both reached home and the undamaged halves were used to make HMS Zubian at the suggestion of Admiral Bacon!

February 7, 1941: Western Approaches command shifted from Plymouth to Liverpool

February 10, 1596: Sir Francis Drake captured Cartagena

February 12, 1942: Unsuccessful attack on the German ships Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen during their escape up the Channel Lt Cdr Eugene Esmonde who led the air assault by six Fairey Swordfish aircraft of 825 Naval Air Squadron awarded posthumous VC

February 18, 1653: First day of battle between Robert Blake - one of the greatest British admirals - with Richard Deane against the Dutch Admiral Marten Tromp off Portland. Five Dutch ships destroyed and one captured

February 21, 1779: Remains of Capt James Cook buried at sea. He was killed on February 14 by natives on Hawaii

February 23, 1633: Samuel Pepys, the first Secretary of the Board of Admiralty, born

February 24, 1970: 824 Naval Air Squadron formed at Culdrose - the first operational deployment of Westland Sea King helicopters

February 25, 1955: Fourth HMS Ark Royal, the first RN carrier built with an angled deck, commissioned

February 28, 1866: Grape shot declared obsolete in RN

NEXT MONTH

We take a look at the Royal Navy in World War I - including the great Battle of Jutland in 1916. The last British survivor of Jutland has just died at 103 (see back page) He was only 16 when he took part!

Competition rules:

All Young Readers Club competitions are open to readers aged 16 or under, except employees of Navy News and their families or any company associated with the competition.

One entry per person. The decision of the judge is final.

Full competition rules are available by contacting us at the usual address.



Carrier plays host to her special friends

AS SHE sailed from North Shields to Portsmouth, HMS Invincible was joined by a party from her affiliated unit, TS Venomous.

During their three days on board the carrier, the Loughborough cadets toured her from top to bottom, stem to stern, taking part in her working life.

They also met OMAW1 Tim Hunting – himself an ex- TS Venomous cadet – who is currently a member of the ship's company.



First of XI units in all Essex

ESSEX District champions this year are TS CARDNELL.

The Maylandsea Unit scored the highest points out of 11 Essex units in football, sailing, canoeing, adventure training, piping, shooting and seamanship.

• LC Giles Drinkwater and AC Michaela Lean are seen receiving the trophy from OIC CPO Nick Temme at the unit's prize evening at the Henry Samuel Hall, Mayland



Submarine passage for Tireless trio



TWO LUCKY Cadets from TS Tireless took the trip of a lifetime when they were selected to travel home from Gibraltar – by submarine.

AC Henry Smith and Cadet Wayne Musgrave were accompanied by the Rugby Unit's CO Capt David Scholes following an invitation from their affiliated nuclear-powered submarine HMS Tireless.

The icing on the cake came from GB Airways who offered to fly them out to the Rock free of charge.

The two cadets had impressed the Unit's staff so much with their performance and effort that they were the instant choice to take up the berths.

Said Capt Scholes: "It really is a privilege to be asked by the boat to visit while on duty.

"Normally it's only people like the Royal Family or high-ranking officials who get this kind of offer."

Asked if any special instructions had been issued to the cadets prior to boarding, Cadet Musgrave said: "Yes – don't touch any buttons!"



Steamer links with Titanic



NORTHAMPTON unit's new affiliation is the ss Shieldhall – a 1,972-tonner powered by similar steam-driven machinery as the Titanic's.

First entering service in 1955, she is of special interest as she was built on older, classic lines by Lobnitz & Co of Renfrew, with a traditional wheelhouse, of riveted and welded construction with a straight stem and a cruiser stern.

She was purchased from Southern Water in 1988 by the charity The Solent Steam Packet Ltd. All work on her is carried out by unpaid volunteers and she is now a familiar sight running excursions around the Solent and elsewhere.

The ship was originally used by Glasgow Corporation to transport treated sewage sludge down the River Clyde to be dumped at sea – but followed a tradition dating back to World War I to carry organised parties of up to 80 passengers when operating during the summer months.

Survey ships' gift

CHAIRMAN of the Survey Ships Association Joe Erskine presents a cheque for £300 to Lt Cdr Howie of Leith unit TS Howe.

The money was collected at a raffle during the Association's reunion weekend at Edinburgh.



EXERCISE Maltese Cross allowed a party of Royal Marines cadets from TS Endurance the chance to put in some valuable training on the island of Malta.

Marine Cadets from Malta have trained with their British counterparts many times in the UK, but this was the first time a session had been held on Maltese soil – at the invitation of the CO of the Malta GC unit TS St Paul, Lt Cdr Kino Camilleri, RNR.

Ten members of the Bristol unit and three staff flew out for the week-long programme, joining the Malta unit on their parade night and quickly integrating with their hosts' routines.

They were dropped off at Ghajn Tuffieha to 'yomp' into the wooded area of Mizieb – spirits undaunted by a sudden downpour.

On arrival at their first location they set up a tactical harbour area – a 'first' for a number of the cadets – and integrated so that a Maltese bivvied with a UK cadet.

Once they had cooked their meals, sentries were posted and all settled into the harbour routine.

A crash move came about 0400 with all moving to a new location and setting up the harbour area again before standing to for the coming dawn.

After cooking breakfast and clearing the bivvie site, they moved off to Selmun, having to speed march the last mile into the site.

From Selmun Barracks, a derelict coastal gun site from World War II, the cadets embarked on a stalk and after lunch met up with the British High Commissioner, Vincent Fean, who spent two hours watching their activities – and left highly impressed with their enthusiasm.

Moving back to Ghajn Tuffieha, the following day saw the party practising patrolling, camouflage and concealment as the final part of the exercise.

During their stay, the Bristol unit was invited to visit the Malta Armed Forces Maritime Unit, where they were introduced to a new range of small arms and

Malta after dark



toured the various patrol craft alongside.

A call at the Malta Armed Forces Air Squadron followed with opportunities to climb inside the aircraft and talk to the pilots.



Glamorous night at Filey for retiring CO Eddie

FILEY Unit's annual mess dinner was the last one for CO Lt Cdr Eddie Temple, who retires in May after 21 years in command.

Guests included Cdr Jonty Powis and WO Tony Elvidge – and 20 former cadets who surprised Eddie with a special presentation retirement gift.

Eddie left the Royal Navy in 1982 after serving in submarines and returned to his native Filey where he found the town's young people seriously short of youth activities. Quickly establishing TS Unseen, within six years he twice brought the unit to the pinnacle of success with the Canada Trophy – it was also twice runner-up.

The Unit continues, year after year, to challenge for the top honours in the Area.



Katy's just the therapy for forces sporting injuries



● Katy Sexton tests the rehab centre flanked by (left) OM Alan Ayliffe and Cpl John Sproates RM

Picture: PO (Phot) Gary Davies

SWIMMING star Katy Sexton performed the honours as a new rehabilitation centre for servicemen and women on the south coast was opened in Portsmouth.

The new facility at HMS Nelson is one of 12 nationwide aimed at speeding the recovery of people in the forces who pick up injuries while playing sport.

An intensive, specially designed programme of physio-, exercise- and hydro-therapy will help sports enthusiasts back to fitness.

The Portsmouth rehab centre will cater for 15 patients with minor to moderate sporting injuries every three weeks across an area from Chichester to Poole.

It spares them having to travel to the Headley Court military medical centre in Surrey.

Katy won gold and silver medals at the World Championships in Barcelona last year.

Nigel's boat puts RN rowers on even keel



● Now with a boat he can call his own: (left to right) Rear Admiral Nigel Guild, his wife Felicity, Cdre Britannia RNC Cdre Tony Johnstone-Burt and Capt Henry Parker, chairman of the RN & RM Amateur Rowing Association

Fickling via HMS Ark Royal and Lt Louise Thatcher in HMS Glasgow.

■ The drive and determination which makes Olympic heroes out of small boat racers can be seen at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

Both male and female squads are now in training for the spring head season. Details on the respective teams from S/Lt James

Robertson's, gold winners at Sydney in 2000, go on show in Falmouth this month.

Alongside the craft a new exhibition, Will to Win, explains what it takes to become an Olympic winner, showing the personal attributes needed as well as the technological advances in developing racing boats.

Adam's lance too strong for opponents

GREEN beret Adam Lancey took the crown for the Senior Service as the first man in the RN or RM to win the National Novice Boxing Championships.

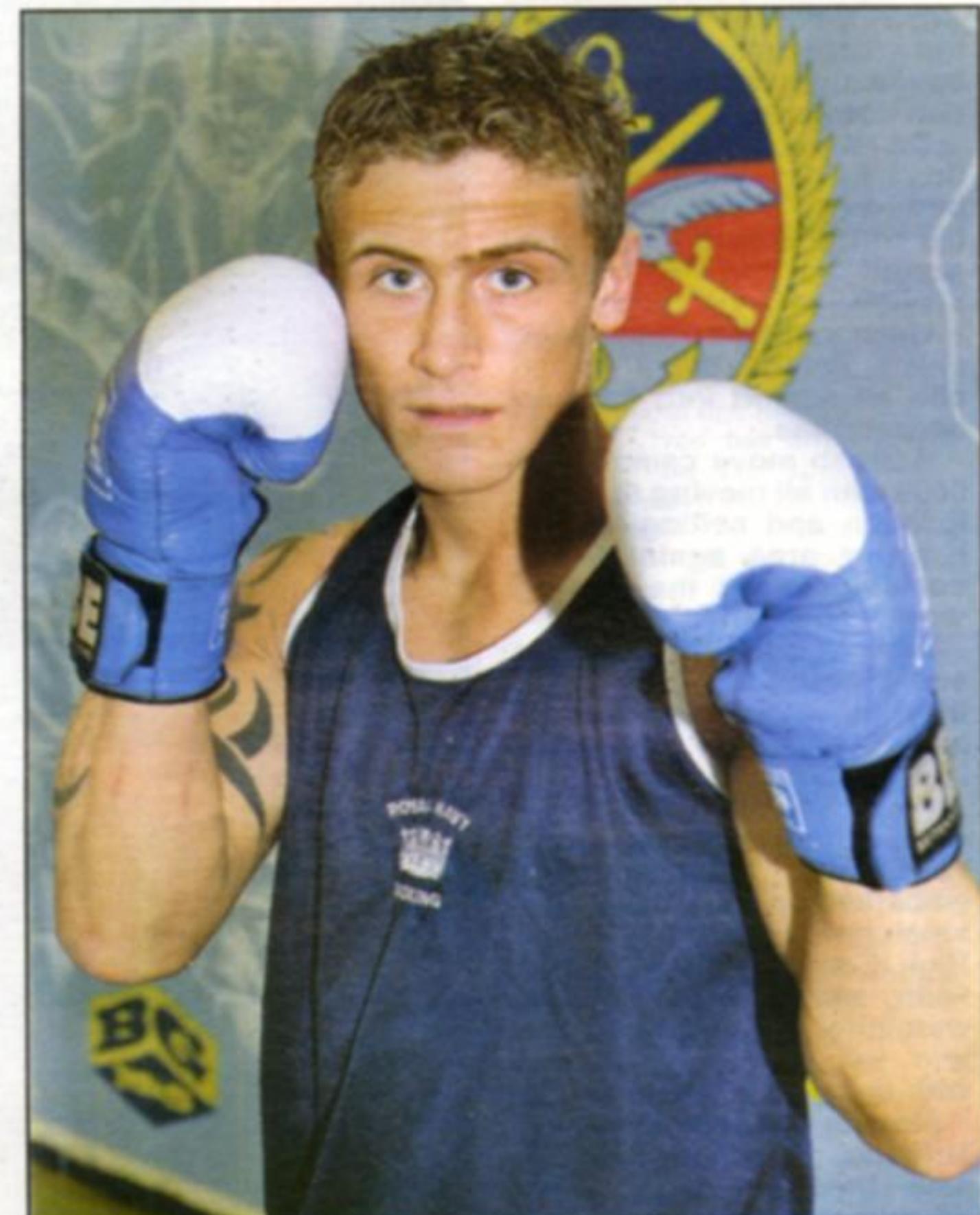
The marine from 40 Cdo got better and better through the rounds, saving his best for the semi and final. He punched his way into the final with a first-round knock out in York, then moved on to Knottingley Arena for the championship decider where he scored a points victory over his opponent from Durham.

Adam joined fellow Royal Marine Alex Urrutia of 42 Cdo at the Welsh National Senior Championships last month in Newport, where both commandos found the competition exceedingly tough. Adam was drawn against last season's light welterweight champion and lost narrowly on points 8-7. Meanwhile, after an excellent quarter-final victory Alex found himself facing last year's English lightweight finalist in the ring. Despite fighting excellently throughout, the green beret lost 24-22 – but earned selection to box for Wales next month in the process.

Mne Jimmy Cusick (1 Assault Group, RM) represented Scotland at international tournaments in Norway and Finland, as the precursory rounds to the Athens Olympics got going in earnest. Jimmy returned from both events with bronze medals and is now readying himself for the European championships this month – one of three qualifying tournaments for the Olympics. A bronze in any for Jimmy will guarantee him a place in the squad.

Fellow 1 Assault Group boxer Mne Mick O'Connell is looking to regain his ABA Heavyweight title after already representing England this season. Mick has also been picked to represent the RN at this year's Combined Services Sportsman of the Year awards.

The excellent work by RN team coach C/Sgt Tommy McPhee and



● Squaring up: National Novice champion Mne Adam Lancey

his staff is moulding a Naval squad up with the best of British boxing talent – and feeding Combined Services coach PO(PT) 'Q' Shillingford with first-class boxers for the forthcoming Inter-Services Championships at HMS Nelson on February 12.

Mne Davey Tang has hung up his gloves to concentrate on Tai Kwondo and Mne Cusick will be away on international duties, but the RN will still be fielding a potent squad including Mne O'Connell, England international and ABA finalist Neil Suka (HMS

York), Combined Services champ OM Mac MacDonald (HMS Invincible) and Mne Lancey.

But 'Q' warns that the Army in particular is fielding a strong side for the contest, and the RAF "cannot be ruled out".

The February 12 contest – first bout begins at 7.30pm – is hosted in Nelson Gym. Tickets, priced £5, are available from Nelson Gate, on the door on the night, or by calling the gym on 023 9272 4151.

HMS Nelson will also be hosting the All England Semi-Finals on Saturday March 20.

HMS Scott's crew reach new heights at sea level



● No quips about cresta a wave, please. S/Lt Ed Barham from Oxford URNU (left), Lt Cdr Andy Mills of the Directorate of Naval Recruiting and S/Lt Colin Hillier (right) prepare to walk to Top Hut to ride the legendary St Moritz cresta run in training for this year's Inter-Services Winter Sports Championships.

The huge sports contest was taking place as Navy News was rolling off the presses and saw one of the largest RN contingents yet head for the Alps.

The RN cresta team, with novices coach Lt Cdr Mills, headed out to St Moritz in mid-January to conduct initial race training in heavy snow and on very fast ice.

Race day for the cresta runners was January 29 and senior winter sports supporters Rear Admiral Mark Kerr and Captain David Goodall were due to cheer the sportsmen and women on.

See next month's edition for a round-up of the RN's performance in the championships.

CREW of survey ship HMS Scott scaled the world's highest peak without the need to don breathing apparatus... or even any mountaineering kit come to think of it.

Thirty members of the Devonport ship's company took it in turns to 'climb' Everest in relays using the vessel's new 'virtual climbing equipment'.

The computer kit simulates the mountaineering experience – or at least the physical effort needed to ascend 29,028ft.

The marathon climb, completed in three hours, six minutes and 20 seconds despite temperatures of 30°C was one of the exercises arranged by Scott's sports officer Lt Linda Lawrence to fight the festive-season flab and keep crew fit.

Almost nine out of 10 sailors aboard took part in a post-Christmas triathlon – running, rowing and riding.

CPO(MEA) Kev Gill cycled 5km in five minutes 30, MEM Ginge Cannon ran 1,500m in almost the same time and S1 Brian Mott rowed 1,500m in little over five minutes.

Scott was one of just three RN ships at sea on Christmas Day sailing through the Indian Ocean on her way to the Gulf region.

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Cup dream over again for RL side



● Navy man of the match Jamie Goss

THE road to Cardiff ended on Humber side for the RN Rugby League side when they ran up against one of the country's top amateur sides in the second round of the Challenge Cup.

After a narrow victory over Normanton in the first round of the contest – RL's counterpart to the FA Cup – the sailors were sent back to the north for the clash with East Hull, but this time without many of the players who proved crucial in the first match.

Hull went into the game top of the Arriva Trains Conference Division 2 and unbeaten in 15 matches.

But it was the RN which got going first; Scott Partis put the first points on the board with a penalty on 10 minutes. That spurred Hull into action; within five minutes they took the lead when skipper John McCracken crossed the line. The Humber side squad ran in three more tries before the break, but poor kicking and a converted try from RN stand-off Dave Roberts meant the sailors were still in touching distance at half-time, just 18-8 down.

The next try would tip the balance of the match – and it went in Hull's favour. They then ran in a succession of tries for only two in reply from RN forwards Carl Gilson and Jamie Goss, to make a somewhat unfair final score of 48-18 to East Hull.

Jamie collected the RN's man of the match award for his commanding performance throughout, topped by the Senior Service's final try.

The RL boys came back from East Hull with some good news. One of the side's U21 players joined the RN last month.

Linda nets coaching job

NETBALL players in Hampshire are looking to Linda Harris for guidance and leadership after the petty officer was asked to coach one of the county's top sides.

Netball enthusiasts believed the HMS Sultan-based senior rating was just what South-east Hampshire needed to bring some fresh impetus to the side.

Linda, a PO(AEA) instructor, turned out for the Navy netball side in the mid-90s and continues to play for Sultan. But beyond a spell coaching volunteer cadets at Daedalus a few years back, guiding an entire team is something new.

'I went to play for the team – they are a very good, committed side – and they asked me to coach for them as well. I think they felt a fresh face would be useful,' the petty officer said.

'I looked back at the coaching I did and thought how much I'd enjoyed it and that it would be nice to do it again. It's very fulfilling and I can learn from the players and pass that on to the Sultan team.'

Linda is now looking to earn coaching qualifications as well as preparing the team for the season finale – the Alex Barlass tournament in Bournemouth at the end of next month.

Plenty of Korea opportunities for footballers

THE Navy's links with South Korea are to be celebrated on the football pitch – as the Senior Service introduced the beautiful game to the country 122 years ago.

Football officials in Seoul have invited an RN squad to turn out in the magnificent stadium at Inchon, which hosted World Cup games during the 2002 tournament, for a match later this year.

HMS Flying Fish's visit to Inchon in 1882 is credited with introducing football to the Koreans.

The invite to players was announced as a celebration marking 100 years of the RN Football Association was held in Portsmouth last month on the site of the former Southern Daily Mail offices – now Zurich Insurance – where the RNFA was born in 1904.

The Royal Navy is credited with introducing and encouraging football in scores of nations around the globe, and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West said it was fitting that support was being acknowledged.

'Football is a game enjoyed by millions around the world and has enormous potential to bring together peoples of widely differing backgrounds and cultures. I'm proud that the RN played such a significant part in introducing the game to South Korea more than 100 years ago,' the admiral added.

Guests at the celebration included Mark Palios, the Football Association's chief executive, and FA chairman Geoff Thompson.

Centenary events continue next month with an Inter-Services clash with the RAF at Fratton Park, home of Portsmouth FC, and a dinner is lined up aboard ironclad HMS Warrior with footballing and RN sporting personalities.

On the pitch, the 1st XI clocked

up two impressive early-season victories, each 1-0.

Gloucester were the opponents for the first competitive game of the season at Almondsbury in Bristol and it was the civvies who got off to the better start. It was late in the first half when the RN managed to put pressure on Gloucester, culminating in a penalty despatched with aplomb by PO(PT) Fraser Quirke from HMS Temeraire.

Gloucester pressed after the break but CPO(PT) Steve Riley (HMS Neptune) marshalled his defence superbly and when a Gloucester striker was sent off for violent conduct, his team's chances ended.

Next up were the Prison Service at Oadby in Leicestershire, on a heavy pitch and bitterly cold January day. AEM Russell Hardwell (HMS Heron) and HMS Glasgow's LPT Tugg Wilson pushed the jailers from the outset,

while at the back PO(PT) Scott Mather and man of the match PO(PT) Steve O'Neil (both HMS Neptune) broke down prison attacks.

CPO Riley scored the sole goal after a scramble at a corner, and the match saw the final outing for CCPO(WEA) Steve Johnson, earning a record 231st cap, before he leaves the Navy.

Next up in the group stage of the South West Counties Cup were Devon, played on home turf in Devonport.

After a tight first half, the sailors put on 15 minutes of pressure in the second period – but failed to turn their territorial advantage into goals. And when Devon striker Carl Cliff-Brown put the civvies 1-0 up after a swift counter-attack, the heart went out of the RN side who conceded another before the game ended scrappily.

Results: South West Counties Cup, group stage: RN 1 Gloucester 0, RN 1 Prison Service 0, RN 0 Devon FA 2.



■ The RN team of the 1930-31 season, including England Internationals Rigger Coats and Pay Lt Cdr Glennister, one of a series of commemorative postcards produced by the RN Philatelic Society to celebrate the RNFA's 100th birthday

CLOB clobbered as Navy make it three out of four

THE full RN Rugby Union side made it three wins in four matches with an impressive victory over Combined London Old Boys – despite missing some of their big guns.

With some first team regulars unavailable, new blood and youth team players were given the chance to shine in the 27-15 win at Richmond RFC's ground.

It was the old boys who were quicker off the mark, with Brownrigg touching down on the right wing inside three minutes. It was the same story 12 minutes later when he again crossed the line to give the capital men a 10-0 lead after some sloppy tackling by the RN and dazzling ball-handling skills by the Londoners.

The match was 20 minutes old before the Navy players began to show some fight; outside centre Tim Southall came within a couple of yards of the line before being halted. His dash helped tip the balance.

Within minutes, Number 8 Gaz Evans drove 15 minutes with CLOB players hanging off him to set up flanker Matt Longhorn, who put the ball down under the posts so Paul Clarke could convert.

The Londoners fought back, and when full back Burrows ran in a third CLOB try he gave the old boys a 15-7 half-time lead.

The opposition would score no more as a changed RN side emerged from the break to seize the initiative and never let go after an 'encouraging' pep talk from RNRU director of rugby Cdr Chris Alcock.

Barely two minutes after the restart, Southall went over after some clever play with Jamie Caruna to dupe the London defence. Within 10 minutes Caruna was on the scoresheet himself, picking up a loose ball just six yards out. Paul Clarke converted the try to make it 19-15.

The RN were now dominating the match and the Londoners were visibly tiring. Constant pressure from the blues led to CLOB scrum half Vickers being sin-binned on 70 minutes for killing the ball.

A penalty from Paul Clarke gave the RN men a seven-point lead, but with the opposition still within touching distance it took an unconverted try by Gareth Fear right at the death to cement the victory 27-15.

Navy players' Capt Nick Bartlett said after the U21 victory over the Army late last year, the RN could

be confident of a successful future with the talent coming through from the youth side.

'These young players are bringing a real close team spirit with them – it's a winning spirit and it's so good to see not just one but four or five players coming through at the same time,' he added.

■ Navy News readers have the chance to make their mark on the pitch in this spring's titanic Army-Navy clash at Twickenham.

Sadly, not as a player hoping to overturn the pongoes after last year's defeat, but as a mascot for the RN side on Saturday May 1.

A boy or girl aged 10-16 has the chance to win a replica RN kit, meet the players, pose for a photograph with the squad, then lead them out onto the hallowed turf for the match itself. After kick-off, the winner will watch the game from the bench.

To enter, correctly answer: who scored the winning drop goal for England in the Rugby World Cup Final in November?

Send entries on the back of an envelope/postcard to Lt Cdr Charlie Neve, Room 119, West Battery, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth, PO2 8DX. Closing date is March 26 and only one entry per child is allowed.

Sport



Size (of squad) matters for RN globetrotters



■ Hannah found this year's team lacked mobility: S/Lt Hannah Byers highlights the lack of basketball players in the RN women's side at a recent training session with posts wearing shirts

THE Navy's Basketball Association hopes to resurrect its ladies team in time for this year's Inter Services championships after a lengthy absence.

It's a good few years since the RN could muster a strong enough female squad to put into the forces' contest, but basketball mainstay S/Lt Hannah Byers is determined to round up enough players so the Senior Service can take on the Army and RAF between March 4 and 7.

At recent training sessions, the junior officer, currently studying at Imperial College, London, on her way to becoming an air engineering officer, has been lucky if five players join her.

Although just five players are on court at any one time, a squad of at least 10 will be needed if the RN is to compete again.

'The ladies team has faded over the last few years, but we're trying to get it going again and need a fresh burst of committed players,' said Hannah.

Training sessions generally take place in Portsmouth, although eventually HMS Drake in Devonport will become the official home of RN basketball.

There are no height restrictions for the team, despite the sport's reputation for needing 'giants'.

'It can help to be tall – but not always. If you're smaller, you can dart around the court more easily,' Hannah added.

Prospective players should contact the junior officer on 07786 076891 or hannah_byers@hotmail.com

Dave's Everest achievement honoured by south west

A FEAT of endurance and skill by green beret Dave Pearce was honoured by fellow sporting achievers in the south west and helped to cement the Royal Marines' sporting reputation.

The WO2 became only the second climber in Senior Service history to reach the summit of the world's highest peak, Mount Everest – and did so via the notoriously difficult North Ridge route.

The assault last spring – the 50th anniversary of the first scaling of Everest – was the culmination of years of planning by an RN/RM team, but a second attempt to reach the summit by the mountaineers was abandoned when two fellow climbers needed assistance on the slopes.

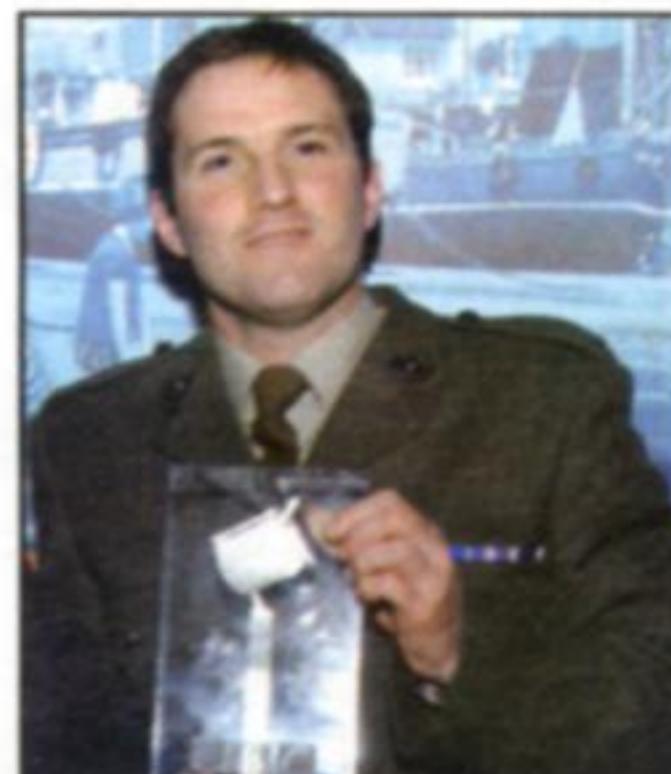
Months on from the climb, Dave collected the title for outstanding international achievement at the inaugural BBC South West Regional Sports Awards.

The mountaineer was up against stiff RM competition; Sgt Mike Beaton, who became the first British serviceman to complete the

Double Ironman Triathlon – a 4.8-mile swim, 224-mile bike ride and a 52.4-mile double marathon on foot – was among the runners-up, alongside fellow green beret Mne Lee Johnson from the GB bobsleigh team.

■ Marine praised for Everest rescue, p31

● WO2 Pearce with his trophy



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NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

● From page one

importance of the Navy and the sea in everyday life in Britain.

"I find it disappointing how our island nation has forgotten how important the sea is. In fact, I'm amazed," he added.

"We are one of the great trading nations at sea still – 95 per cent of imports and exports move by sea and the maritime industry contributes £37bn to the nation's economy."

People should remember that few navies around the world could have achieved what the RN had done in the past 12 months.

"I believe we are the second most powerful navy in the world and I believe that sailor for sailor we have the best Navy in the world."

"In technological terms, I cannot think of any nation which can stand up to us and the United States in a 'hot war'. The operations in the Gulf last year were a classic of their kind."

"I know what it is like to lose friends from my experiences in the Falklands. But let us not forget that last year's operation was something Britain should be proud of."

Central to that sense of maritime pride will be next year's events marking the anniversary of Trafalgar – the highpoint of which will be a Fleet Review at Spithead the like of which has not been seen, followed by an International Festival of the Sea in Portsmouth Harbour.

"There will be a Fleet review in 2005, and many other events," said Admiral West. "In terms of the nations involved, the Review will be the largest there has been."

Turning to new and impending additions to the Fleet, the First Sea Lord said the RN's future arsenal looked "very exciting".

"HMS Albion is a magnificent ship, which has brought about a step-change in capability."

"The Type 45 destroyer will be the world's best anti-air warfare ship."

"As for the future carriers, I would guess they will be about 55,000 tons."

Their flight decks will be twice the size of the old Ark Royal."

There had been delays with new vessels such as hunter-killer submarine HMS Astute and the Bay Class amphibious ships (see page 34). But those problems were now in hand, and difficulties with new survey ships HMS Echo and Enterprise were nowhere nearly as bad as some of the media had portrayed.

"We've had problems with these ships, but they will provide a class of surveying the RN has not seen before," he added.

Echo sailed on her maiden deployment to the Gulf on January 16.

Admiral West said there had been intense speculation about cuts to the existing and future fleet, but as far as he was concerned he would fight the Navy's corner to ensure that the public and the RN got the best deal possible.

"When push comes to shove, there have to be priorities. We have got to get the best deal we can."

"Being military minded, I will take every penny the Government gives me," he explained.



● HMS Northumberland at the London Boat Show. The Type 23 frigate had 20,000 visitors in ten days

Picture: Lt Cdr Mark Guy



We say 'Vive l'Entente' – for another hundred years!



● CORDIALE: Admiral Sir Alan West, Rear Admiral Jean-Pierre Tiffou and Ellen MacArthur salute the centenary of the Entente at the London Boat Show

Picture: LA(PHOT) Dave Griffiths

A NEW century of Anglo-French co-operation at sea has been ushered in by three of the nations' most well-known mariners.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West joined French Defence Attaché Rear Admiral Jean-Pierre Tiffou and world-renowned yachtswoman Ellen MacArthur at the London Boat Show, celebrating 100 years of close ties between the two navies which for centuries had been mortal enemies.

One century on from the Entente Cordiale, the two navies are committed to operating ever closer around the globe.

Admiral West said this would be symbolised by Type 42 destroyer HMS Gloucester escorting the pride of the French Navy, carrier Charles de Gaulle, on a deployment east of Suez this month.

The de Gaulle will return the compliment this summer when she pays her first visit to Portsmouth; and frigate HMS Norfolk will represent the RN at Brest 2004, one of the world's leading maritime gatherings.

"For centuries the relationship between our two countries has not been as good as we might have liked," said Admiral West.

"But today French and British naval co-operation has never been stronger. There is so much which links us."

Admiral Tiffou added: "We should not so much celebrate the past in marking the Entente, but ensure the people of the two nations come to know each other better."

As part of that greater understanding, a combined Anglo-French Naval escort will be provided for one of the yachting world's top events.

The Transat – or Transatlantic – single-handed race will see the cream of the sailing community head from Plymouth on May 31, bound for Boston, USA.

Ellen MacArthur said the escort from British and French warships would be a fitting send-off for the racers.

"The start of a trans-oceanic race is always a great spectacle, but having both the French and British navies there will really add to the spectacle," she added.

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